

**Geographies of fidelity: emergent spaces of third sector activity
after the Canterbury earthquakes**

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Abstract

This thesis examines creative trajectories of urban life that irrupted as a result of a series of devastating earthquakes in the city of Christchurch, New Zealand, in 2010-11. In particular, it focuses on third sector organisations (TSOs) that emerged during the recovery period, and examines how these organisations sought to inscribe themselves within the re-emerging city. In doing so, I argue that the rupture afforded by the earthquakes opened up the possibility for the dominant practices of a complex political conservatism to be challenged through the emergence of new and previously restrained claims to the city that have manifested through these TSOs. These organisations have made use of the temporary recovery-spaces of the city, and appear to be working to embed their underlying values and politics in its renewal. Pertinently, this thesis comprehensively explores the ways these emergent organisations were impelled and sustained by improvisations that attempted to invoke and continue a fidelity to the earthquake event.

The dominant narrative in the city has since critiqued these emergent organisations as being subsumed by a broader state project that is working to restore a neoliberal and conservative style of politics. Drawing largely upon in-depth participatory research within emergent TSOs, this thesis seeks to evaluate the notion that the creative forces of these organisations have become stripped of radical potential through a gradual incorporation into a more resilient version of the previous political orthodoxy. In doing so, it contributes to literatures on the political possibilities of the third sector by paying attention to the organisational practices that foster alternative logics of performative expression, political engagement and cultural imagination alongside formations of the seemingly neoliberal. By drawing attention towards the tentative probing of sociocultural and material fissures, practices of organisational experimentation and the ethical agency of staff, I argue that the sector might be viewed as fostering spaces through which alternative ethical and political sensibilities are being actively contested on a range of scales.

Subsequently, this thesis explores how the foundations and relations that previously made the city legible have been shaken. Accordingly, the research offers a re-reading of the earthquakes that makes an argument for something more complex than an automatic return to the status-quo. It recognises the earthquakes as a series of violent geophysical events that prompted the irruption of some potentially disruptive imaginations, but explores perceptions that the disaster couldn't impel others. Underpinning discussion on how these imaginations are grasped and sustained is an examination of how possibilities were afforded or curbed by interpretations of what the earthquakes represented (or enabled) in ongoing storylines of the city. Consequently, this thesis explores what it actually meant in practice for these organisations to be faithful to the event.

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List of Acronyms

ABNC	A Brave New City
CanCERN	Canterbury Communities' Earthquake Recovery Network
CCC	Christchurch City Council
CCDU	Central Christchurch Development Unit
CHRP	Canterbury Home Repair Programme
CERA	Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority
CERR	Canterbury Earthquake Recovery and Response Act
ECAN	Environment Canterbury
EQC	Earthquake Commission
EQR	Earthquake Recovery (Fletcher repair programme)
FESTA	Festival of Transitional Architecture
GF	Gap Filler
GtR	Greening the Rubble
ItK	In the Know (Hub)
LFF	Let's Find & Fix initiative
LIVS	Life in Vacant Spaces
MBIE	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
MoA	Ministry of Awesome
RAS	Residential Advisory Service
TRoNT	Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu
TSO	Third Sector Organisation
USF	University of South Florida

Framing Fidelity

What we have here is an opportunity... something solid to stand on and say 'now's the time for something different'. The earthquakes have provided the perfect illustration that things can't go on in the same direction as they were. What's more, for the first time I can remember, we're starting to see the same recognition from people in government too... Thanks to that [points to the ground], the winds are changing.

(Interview with CanCERN, a post-quake emergent third sector organisation [April 10, 2015])

You've been had... I don't doubt that you've got the best of intentions but you're not helping anyone around here. All you're doing is playing up the idea that everything's alright... that's the government story isn't it? You've hopped over the fence to play the role of community representative and all you're doing is missing the opportunity to work towards something better.

(Visitor to CanCERN [July 9, 2015])

1.1 Introduction

On 4th September 2010, the city of Christchurch, New Zealand, was severely shaken by a magnitude 7.1 earthquake, causing significant damage to buildings, substantial psychosocial anxiety and extensive infrastructural disruption. This was followed by another earthquake of magnitude 6.3 on 22nd February, 2011. With its epicentre both shallower and closer to the centre of the city, the February quake resulted in the loss of 185 lives and extensive damage to both the city-centre and suburban homes. In conjunction with over 13,000 aftershocks, these earthquakes have been the most expensive and socially disruptive disaster that New Zealand has ever experienced (Nicholls, 2014). At the time of writing in 2017, the affected citizens, communities and businesses are still at various stages of recovery and reconstruction – with parts of the city-centre, in particular,

still awaiting demolition and subsequent restoration. Many are even now waiting for their homes to be repaired (Broadstock, 2016) and the psychological (and thus psychosocial) effects of the quakes are still emerging (Beaglehole et al., 2017).

Accounts of the subsequent period in the life of disaster zones and their inhabitants have focused largely on ideas of disruption and resilience, as well as the individual and collective capacity to adapt and function as part of a gradual return to normality (see Cloke & Conradson, forthcoming; Saunders & Becker, 2015). It is clear, however, that the idea of 'normality' in the context of such extensive social and material disruption has at least to be regarded as some kind of 'new normal' (Winstanley, Hepi, & Wood, 2015). In Christchurch, this search for a new normal holds an apparent tension between a return to pre-earthquake regularity and the ability to carry out everyday, taken-for-granted roles, habits and activities within the profoundly altered environments of city, neighbourhood and home. In some instances, the notion of 'normal' is temporally defined. Roadworks, for example, have become a synonymous part of life in Christchurch, and have been integrated into discourses of what 'normality' is like for the city during the recovery period – to the point where orange traffic cones (and particularly, the placing of flowers in them) have become a symbol for a city that is broken, yet moving towards a recovered state.¹ In other instances, for citizens of Christchurch, this has meant acknowledging that attachments, habits and ways-of-doing will be irrevocably changed by the earthquakes.

Aside from the momentous and often devastating economic, social and psychological issues that individuals and households have been forced to negotiate (see Calder et al., 2016), the process of seeking out and inhabiting a new normal also appears to contain an implicit set of contestations. As well as causing extensive material damage to the city, the earthquakes can be understood to have shaken the foundations, structures and relations that previously made the city legible, and its aftermath can be associated with the co-construction of new senses of life and place, involving alternative imaginations and assemblages. Sitting behind these co-constructions is the question of what the earthquakes represented in ongoing storylines of how life is governed, lived and performed.

¹ See <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/9760887/Video-pokes-fun-at-Chch-road-cones>

Accounts of post-quake life in Christchurch offer polarised narratives. Emergent disaster narratives reveal references to both the further entrenchment of a neoliberal, conservative political system (Johnston, Sears, & Wilcox, 2012) and to the earthquakes as marking the birth of a 'new, creative and politically engaged' city (Wesener, 2015). It has also been argued that there has been a transition between the two, with the creativity, altruism and alternative 'spirits' emerging within the initial recovery phases said to be giving way to the re-establishment of the former political way-of-doing (Hayward, 2013). The quotes that open this thesis alone point to the different ways in which the earthquakes have been given meaning, raising a number of critical questions about how various claims are made about what the disaster represents in the narrative of individuals and the city more broadly. Evident within these extracts is the idea that the earthquakes, and subsequent recovery period, have resulted in the irruption of alternative narratives and imaginations of, and for, the city.

It is with reference to this last point that this thesis is situated. It examines how new forms of knowledge and subjectivity, as well as a potential for empowering that which was previously repressed, emerge through a faithfulness to the interruption caused by the earthquakes. Rather than assuming that responses to the earthquakes will automatically reflect or embed a hegemonic ideological project, this thesis instead pays attention to the different trajectories of individual and collective creativity and experimentation that can be envisaged as emanating from the ruptures to the status-quo brought about by the disaster. I explore how individuals and third sector organisations interpreted and enacted claims as to what the earthquakes represented, and I discuss the probing of sociocultural and geophysical fissures that enabled these claims to be realised and made. I comprehensively examine the ways these trajectories are sustained by improvisations that invoke and continue a fidelity to that event – with specific attention given to the ways that these trajectories are sought to be inscribed within the new normal of the city. In short, this thesis pays attention to the contestations that emerged between the more conservative political responses to the earthquakes and the attempts to realise, legitimise and embed alternative claims that arose through the disaster's rupturing of the status-quo.

In order to carry out these deliberations and evaluations, particular consideration is given to the practices of third sector organisations (hereafter TSOs) that

emerged as a result of the earthquakes. As later detailed, the emergent third sector in Christchurch appeared to represent a series of spaces through which alternative, improvised and collective responses to the earthquakes manifested and were represented. Many of these organisations have challenged and questioned neoliberalised formulations of a resilient person or city, offering instead alternative and arguably more progressive senses of place, urban imaginaries and performative possibilities in the city (see Cupples, 2015). The disturbed environments of the post-disaster city has presented what Solnit (2010) regards as 'small temporary utopias' in which alternative forms of co-operation, care and community spontaneously emerge – often coordinated and structured through third sector activity.

Yet, as with many modern accounts of the third sector (see Evans & Shields, 2000), these organisations have been critiqued as being subsumed by the tenets of neoliberal and conservative governmentality, positioned as pseudo-governmental bodies that become wrapped up in the reproduction and entrenchment of the seemingly 'impossible to break' status-quo. In attempting to more carefully evaluate this critique, this thesis pays particular attention to discourses of co-option and subversion within the third sector – providing a more complex and considered account of the strategic practices and positionings employed by TSOs as they go about imagining and remaking life in Christchurch.

In what follows, I set out the wider context of this work. I begin by introducing the context in which this research is situated – detailing the extent of the earthquakes and the subsequent recovery landscape. I then provide a brief summary of recent work on TSOs and the disaster landscape, in doing so situating the thesis amongst existing literatures, before moving to introduce the conceptual framework that drives this thesis. This chapter concludes with the introduction and discussion of the research aims and questions before, finally, providing a brief overview of the structure of the thesis.

1.2 The Canterbury Earthquakes²

I begin by introducing the context that informs this thesis. The purpose of this section is not to give a complete overview of the earthquake landscape in Christchurch.³ A part of the intention of the three empirical chapters (Chapters Five, Six and Seven) is to explore more comprehensively the ways in which the earthquakes and associated recovery has been experienced by different actors. Furthermore, Chapter Three examines more specifically the ways in which the earthquakes ruptured colonial and political narratives of the city. Instead, the aim of this section is to reflect on the extent of the earthquakes themselves, and begin to introduce narratives of institutional, private market and third sector behaviour that shaped research direction.

During 2010 and 2011, Canterbury experienced five large earthquakes and, in the years to come, thousands of aftershocks. The earthquake series unfolded with separate faults rupturing at different points in time, creating an uneven landscape of disruption and recovery. The first quake, in September 2010, resulted in approximately 100 injuries but no fatalities. Minor damage was reported as far away as Dunedin and Nelson, both around 300-350 kilometres (190-220 miles) from the earthquake's epicentre. Power was interrupted to 75% of the city. Sewer and water lines were damaged city wide, and other forms of infrastructure, such as bridges and treatment plants, were severely affected (Potter et al., 2015).

The second significant quake, that struck at 12.51pm on Tuesday 22 February 2011, caused significant damage, injuries and loss of life. This event had a vastly different character to that of the September earthquake. The epicentre was closer to the city and at a depth of only 5 km. This shake produced peak ground accelerations in the Christchurch CBD that were 2.5 times greater than the accelerations felt during the September earthquake, resulting in far more catastrophic circumstances (Stevenson et al., 2011). In total, 185 people were

² The earthquakes are commonly referred to as the 'Canterbury earthquakes' – Canterbury being the state/district in which Christchurch is the major city. The most significant damage was located within Christchurch (which forms the basis of this study), as well as some smaller satellite towns. For the purpose of this thesis, I will refer to the 'Canterbury earthquakes' broadly, however will commonly refer to the 'earthquakes in Christchurch' when exploring empirical material.

³ The University of Canterbury led online earthquake database CEISMIC can be found at <http://www.ceismic.org.nz/>. This is an excellent resource that contains numerous academic and public accounts of earthquake life in Christchurch.

killed in the February 2011 earthquake, making it the second-deadliest geological event recorded in New Zealand (after the 1931 Hawke's Bay earthquake). Many buildings that received 'green stickers' (deemed safe to enter) after the September earthquake, exhibited complete structural failure during the February event. Utility outages and road and property damage caused by liquefaction throughout the Christchurch area caused the voluntary evacuation of tens of thousands of people from the city. The government declared New Zealand's first ever 'state of national emergency', which lasted two months (Brookie, 2012). Figures 1, 2 and 3 illustrate the effects of this February quake on the material landscape of the central city.

The earthquakes in 2010 and 2011, and the subsequent thousands of aftershocks, are by far the most expensive disasters in New Zealand's modern history. By April 2013, the total estimated cost had ballooned to NZD\$40 billion (approximately £25billion), distributed between infrastructure (\$5 billion), commercial assets (\$15 billion), and residential property (\$18 billion). The total estimated cost of the damage is equivalent to approximately 19 per cent of New Zealand's GDP (NZ Treasury, 2013). Although estimates vary, the costs arising from the February quake alone are among the top 10 insured loss events worldwide since 1980 (Deloitte, 2015). Optimistic accounts estimate that the central city will be functioning at a 'limited capacity' by 2020, although some economists have estimated it will take the New Zealand economy 50 to 100 years to completely recover (Satherley, 2013). These earthquakes, then, represent a significant series of events in both the social and economic histories of New Zealand.



Figure 1: Damage in the city centre from the 22 February quake (Stuff, 2011)



Figure 2: Aerial shot of Christchurch CBD in 2012. Many of these buildings were awaiting demolition (Civil Infrastructure & Engineering Group, 2012)



Figure 3: Christchurch CBD in 2012 (Civil Infrastructure & Engineering Group, 2012)

State and Private Market Responses

The recovery period in Christchurch has been marked by increased central government interference in local authority responsibilities. Less than two weeks after the September earthquake, Parliament passed the Canterbury Earthquake Response and Recovery (CERR) Act, which facilitated central government response and recovery activities in the affected region. In addition to mobilising resources for the recovery, the CERR Act 2010 was accompanied by the appointment of a Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery – a position with special powers to coordinate the recovery and reconstruction activities on behalf of the central government (CERA, 2013).

In 2011 the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA) was established by the government as the “agency established by the Government to lead and coordinate the ongoing recovery effort following the devastating earthquakes of September 2010 and February 2011” (CERA, 2012). CERA was a national government department responsible for coordinating recovery activities with the Christchurch City Council, the Selwyn and Waimakariri District Councils, the Regional Council known as Environment Canterbury (ECan), and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (TRoNT) (Brookie, 2012). CERA reported to the Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery, Gerry Brownlee, who was allocated “special powers ... in order to enable an effective, timely and co-ordinated rebuilding and recovery effort” (CERA, 2012). These powers included the ability to acquire and dispose of land, order demolitions, restrict access, change land titles and survey information (without needing consent), assume regulatory management, and direct that action be taken to suspend, amend, cancel or delay council plans.

Whilst CERA’s initial focus was ensuring the immediate safety of Christchurch buildings, the mid-term recovery period (1-3 years post-event) saw a shift towards the acquisition of land and property for the rebuild period. A contentious residential zoning system was introduced based upon land having the capability to house residential construction (considering current and potential future damage). Through this process, over 8,000 homes were zoned ‘red’ in Christchurch, meaning that homeowners were forced to sell their properties to the central government. Further explored in Chapter Five, this system saw ‘red-zoners’ reimbursed for their properties through a complex, combined

government-private market insurance system. However, the legality of the system has been heavily criticised and is still subject to ongoing court action (Miles, 2016). Figures 4 and 5 show two of the more central red-zone areas, illustrating the ways that this zoning system sharply and palpably divided the city.



Figure 4: A red-zoned neighbourhood in Christchurch in 2017 (Stuart, 2017)



Figure 5: The Dallington (an eastern city suburb) red-zone 'pocket' (McGregor, 2017)

In regards to the central business district (CBD), in April 2012 CERA established the Christchurch Central Development Unit (CCDU) which was tasked with laying out a plan for the CBD. This involved a compulsory acquisition of land in order to build a series of 'anchor-projects' (such as a large convention centre and sports stadium). Many raised concerns that the CCDU was not established collaboratively with the Christchurch City Council (CCC) and in some ways trumped the efforts the council had undertaken to consult with local communities (Taylor et al., 2012). Further encroachment of central government included removing the power of the city council to grant building consents and the control of all future 'development' projects handed over to CERA staff (Stevenson, 2014).

Criticism and concern has also been directed towards the shifting relationships between the national government and private market. In particular, there have been contentions that the lack of local (council or community) involvement in the recovery efforts were allowing for specific industries and companies to profit unfairly. Most prominently, the awarding of multimillion dollar contracts to control aspects of the rebuild to different private companies have played out amid allegations of conflicts of interest in the tender process (Berry, 2012). More recently, reports have emerged of individual CERA staff members attempting to contract governmental work to businesses they were involved in (State Services Commission, 2017) – reports that, despite concerning specific individuals, compounded public distrust in emergent government-private sector partnerships. In addition, the complexities of a joint insurance scheme to reimburse properties from earthquake damage (and, in some cases, red-zoning) led to further concern over the relationships between the government insurance fund (the Earthquake Commission – EQC) and private insurance companies. In theory, the dual system (where the first NZD\$100,000 of any domestic claim damage is paid by EQC, with private insurers paying the rest) was supposed to ease pressure on insurance companies whilst also providing a 'fall-back' for lesser-insured victims. In reality, the system created significant inefficiencies and created distrust of both governmental and insurance company conduct. As Sarah Miles, a local lawyer, stated: "This half-way solution of part-governmental and part-private insurance bailouts creates needless complexity and the population suffers both poor service and uncertainty as a consequence. One body waits to see what the other will do, while the affected population is kept 'hostage' between the two" (2016, p. 178).

The private sector has also independently played a significant role in shaping recovery experiences and trajectories in Christchurch. It is against the catastrophic background of the earthquakes that the inadequacy of insurance, reinsurance practices and industry conduct has come into sharp focus. The conduct of insurance companies, in both the delays in settling claims and the pressure placed on individuals to accept low-ball offers, have been widely acknowledged as extending the effects of the earthquakes – placing physiological and economic stress on individuals and prolonging recovery periods (Parsons, 2014). The conduct of insurance companies is explored in Chapter Six, however the effects of insurance company inadequacy are still being dealt with at the time of writing, and a number of cases are currently still in front of the courts (Young, 2016). In addition, the collapse of the second largest residential insurer in New Zealand, AMI, in late 2011 saw the establishment of a government agency, Southern Response, to settle the claims of the failed company – a move that, whilst ensuring that private claims could be settled, further conflated the boundaries between state and the private market post-quake.

Changing Third Sector Landscape

Against the backdrop of widespread concern and anger in regards to the conduct of the state and private market post-quake, the ‘third sector’ was initially viewed as a bastion for the community in Christchurch. In this context, the third sector can be defined as consisting of formal organisations that are distinct from government and the private market and is not profit driven. As Carlton & Vallance (2013) illustrated, the recovery period in Christchurch saw a significant increase in the presence of TSOs. Of the 450 community-led groups and initiatives they documented operating in the post-quake recovery landscape, almost half of them (230) were established in response to the earthquakes. Most interestingly, however, was not just this emergence, but the different foci of existing and emergent organisations. Whilst the term ‘third sector’ undoubtedly includes a vast array of organisational activity (ranging from welfare, advocacy, faith-based services and political activism), they noted a distinct difference in the kinds of activity TSOs were involved in. On one hand, in many instances established TSOs had added earthquake related welfare activity to their existing practices. Whilst some emergent groups were established to help meet a specific post-earthquake need, such as food provision or accommodation relief, these ‘core’

welfare activities tended to be picked up by established and embedded organisations – such as the Red Cross, Salvation Army and City Mission.

In contrast, emergent TSOs were broadly viewed as being involved in stimulating new sets of practices and performances that made possible imaginations of a *different kind of city*. At first glance, the emergent third sector appeared to be working to reshape political and ethical engagements with the post-quake city; prompting and mediating people's social and institutional encounters, including the conduct of routine, improvised and spontaneous inhabitations of the city. The most well-publicised and prolific of these have been engaged in, loosely, three strands of practices that sought to provoke new imaginations and understandings of what the city could become. Firstly, this took shape through the prompting of particular aesthetic engagements with the city. Organisations, such as Gap Filler, A Brave New City, Greening the Rubble and Life in Vacant Spaces (who are explored in Chapter Seven) were enabled by copious availability of vacant land following the destruction and demolition of much of the CBD, and went about curating the potential for cultural, artistic and performative uses of temporary spaces in the city.

Secondly, a range of organisations (such as the Canterbury Communities' Earthquake Recovery Network [CanCERN] and the Wider Earthquake Communities' Action Network [WeCAN!]) appeared to be prompting different forms of political engagement for disenfranchised and disillusioned local citizens who were pushing for a more participatory rebuild and recovery (CanCERN is the subject of Chapter Six). These organisations seemed to be moving within the blurry ground between the 'public' and the 'state', simultaneously offering a form of political advocacy and engagement whilst pushing for some degree of institutional change. For example, CanCERN were contracted both by the state and insurance companies to reconnect disenfranchised citizens with recovery and welfare agencies. Concurrently, the organisation publically critiqued the conduct of the state and worked to build public pressure to change recovery strategies, practices and priorities.

Thirdly, a form of creative social and economic entrepreneurship could be seen through organisations such as Ministry of Awesome, where the emergence and cultivation of a 'can do' attitude – generated both through discourses of

earthquake resilience and the push for a '21st century city' – sought to shape the rebuilding urban and economic environments. In all of these strands, it appeared that emergent TSOs were drawing upon the post-quake physical, social and political landscapes to foster unexpected and creative engagements with the city. These organisations have, in part, given rise to a broader experimental creative movement in Christchurch that engaged people in different and unusual ways.

In the initial stages of recovery, these emergent organisations appeared to be playing a significant role in contributing to the makeup of the 'new' Christchurch – receiving significant national and global media attention and garnering considerable support from local citizens (Atkinson, 2012). At some level, their success, popularity and visibility appeared to be because they played a role in disrupting the conservative imaginaries which had previously informed individual, corporate and governmental narratives of the city, offering a point of departure from the expected process of state-driven recovery. In this vein, their existence appeared to represent the creative emergence of something needed in Christchurch. In earlier research I conducted (see Dickinson, 2013), participants described the creative rise within the third sector as being “what we actually need at the moment” as opposed to “the usual suspects...who seem to think that we need food and water” (red-zone interview, 4/2/13). Touched upon in these comments was the critical perception that established TSOs, such as the Salvation Army and City Mission, weren't equipped with the resources needed by many in Christchurch. In an broadly affluent and developed city, it was felt that (beyond the initial recovery period) welfare was needed in forms other than food and water. It was perceived that these new organisations offered a route through which new engagements with the city might be fostered, enabling forms of representation and imagination that contributed to an innovative sense of urban life in Christchurch (see also Koch & Latham, 2014).

It did not take long, however, for critical discourses to emerge that wrote off these emergent TSOs as frivolous and fleeting distractions who became wrapped up in the wider governmentalities of neoliberal politics. As explored extensively throughout this thesis, these discourses circulated around the claim that these organisations were providing a kind of diversion whilst national and local government were 'pre-occupied' with larger earthquake recovery issues. In some instances, they appeared to be viewed as providing a fleeting filling of gaps that

would soon be taken up again by the mainstream infrastructure of the city – representing a “frivolous irrelevant blip in the tonal landscape whilst waiting for the new future to arrive” (Cloke & Conradson, forthcoming). The establishment of relationships with state bodies by many of these organisations, particularly as the recovery period wore on, furthered a sense that conservative powers were reclaiming domains temporarily lost in the chaos of the disaster (Hayward, 2012). Entwined within this critique was the supposed loss of the potential for the earthquakes to mark a turning point in the narrative of the city. Importantly, for local citizens, this critique appeared to be shared by the belief that engaging with these organisations resulted in an implicit acceptance of local and national government recovery plans post-quake – a discourse that seemingly shaped engagement with emergent TSOs.⁴ One set of significant questions arising from the earthquakes, then, is not just around the degree to which reinstatement of the dominant political narrative in the city has manifested through its recovery, but the ways in which third sector activities have influenced this narrative.

1.3 Situating the Thesis

In this section I provide a brief overview of the key conceptual discussions that inform this thesis, foregrounding more detailed discussion in Chapters Two and Three. This thesis is situated within geographical considerations of the third sector and, in particular, the ways in which practices within the third sector might open out opportunities for emergent politics of progressive possibility. Although definitions of the third sector vary significantly, I broadly define a TSO as any organisation that is nongovernmental and ‘value-driven’ (i.e. concerned with purposes other than profit). The term itself emerges from Etzioni’s 1973 thesis *The Third Sector and Domestic Missions*, and in practice is used to refer to widely differing kinds of organisations, including charities, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), self-help groups, social enterprises, networks, and clubs (Corry, 2010). Although defined as a ‘loose and baggy monster’ of a concept (Kendall & Knapp, 1995), the idea of a third sector works from the ‘neither state nor market’ adage, where TSOs in part define their existence as being in some way ideologically distinct from the tenets of the state or the market. As I will draw attention to throughout this thesis, this definition is important as it emphasises the

⁴ This perception was documented in previous Masters research I conducted in Christchurch. The ways in which that research informed this project are more deeply examined in Chapter Four.

difference between being *ideologically distinct* from other societal actors and being *operationally distinct*.

In what follows, I briefly draw attention to the conceptual orthodoxies through which state-third sector relationships are understood, before shifting to introduce what this inflects about the curation of particular kinds of subjects. The section then examines these characterisations within the disaster context, before moving to introduce and explore the rationalities behind the use of 'fidelity' and 'event' as a theoretical framework.

TSOs as Puppets of the State?

Over the last four decades, TSOs have become important players in global society. Their growing influence has been widely charted, including activities that range from welfare provision to political activism (see Alcock, 2012; Hemment, 2004; Takao, 2001). Nevertheless, the prevalent social science narrative of the role that TSOs plays in society typically positions them as unwilling victims, and in some cases knowing associates, who are caught up in the neoliberal incorporation of voluntary resources (Goode, 2006; Hackworth, 2009; Lyon-Callo, 2008; Peck, 2006a; Williams, 2012). Neoliberally driven governance over this period has broadly led to shrinkage of public service provision and a greater inclination to contract out service delivery, and TSOs appear to be indistinguishably interconnected with these trends as they have expanded their scope in order to fill the gap. As a result, TSOs have been represented as merely being incorporated into the wider governmentalities of neoliberal politics so as to allow less expensive forms of government, as well as being perceived as pseudo-governmental bodies caught up in the governmentalisation of the third sector (Jenkins, 2005). This had led to a normative approach that generally casts TSOs as, what Peck and Tickell (2002, p. 390) term, the "little platoons of neoliberalism".

Consequently, TSO activity was previously often conceptualised as only responsive to state ideologies, the normative trope being the 'co-option' into the tenets hegemonic power. As Williams et al. (2014) point out, the spaces, actors, and practices that are potentially at odds with neoliberal logics are generally conceptualised as being subsumed within hegemonic accounts of roll-out neoliberalisation. These tend to rehearse stories of accommodative compromise,

and subsequently the alternative option is the pursuing of confrontational and pre-figurative oppositions to the state apparatus. In regards to the latter point, faced with the dilemma of supposedly inevitable incorporation, some have argued that it is vital for third sector organisations to distance themselves from the state (Fyfe, 2005). Amin, Cameron and Hudson (2002, p. 125), for example, argue that TSOs must resist pressures to conform to “the image of the mainstream” and instead act as a space of alterity. Wolch (1999) argues a similar point, advocating that the third sector should act more as a ‘space of resistance’ and less as a shadow state.

Such determinations of positioning and agency, however, run the risk of structuring thought in such a way that more progressive political action can only ever be theorised in terms of re-active behaviour – it is *only ever recognisable as totalising resistance*. Indeed, part of the rationale of this thesis is that any dismissal of those grasping the opportunities at hand to work interstitially and symbiotically towards progressive ends is itself a potential undermining of progressive political potential – buying into a false dichotomy in which participation equals accommodative compromise, whilst resistance equals non-involvement with the state (Williams et al., 2014). As such, critical questions remain as to how new conceptual grammars might be developed to supplement and trouble the current shortcomings of vocabularies of responses to neoliberal governmentality (Ferguson, 2011).

In response, this thesis draws upon recent literatures around ‘progressive localism’ that build on the framing of neoliberalism as complex political assemblages – acknowledging that assemblage thinking orientates focus towards the different ways in which projects endure across differences and amid transformations and, importantly, it fosters a sensitivity towards how political orders are changed and reworked. As Anderson et al. (2012) point out, at its most simple level, a politics of assemblage “maps how powerful assemblages [such as neoliberalism] form and endure, thus loosening the deadening grip abstract categories hold over our sense of political possibility” (p. 186). This style of thinking, therefore encourages analysis that explores third-sector-state relationships as something more than fluid, iconic expressions of neoliberalisation, and instead frames emergent relationships as social formations

consisting of multiple projects and rationales, realised through diverse assemblages of actors, institutions and (as introduced later) fidelities.

Neoliberal Subjectivities

Extending the belief that TSOs have become pseudo-governmental bodies caught up in the decentralisation of state forms is the argument that TSOs are consequently wrapped up in new forms of the governance of subjects (Cloke, May, & Johnsen, 2010). This belief stems from the idea that TSOs are a part of new forms of the governing of the self, referring to the filtering down of attempts by institutional collective actors to directly manipulate the conduct of social subjects. This is to suggest that, whilst classically the third sector been interpreted as an arena of neoliberal co-option and subjectification, TSOs are also in some way utilised in a broader regime that seeks to shape and form different kinds of subjects and subjectivities. Within these accounts, organisations are assumed to operate as a kind of ‘middle man’ in the mobilisation and promulgation of specific kinds of rationalities, technologies and subjectivities (Williams, Cloke, & Thomas, 2012). For example, Dean (2010) points to the task of neoliberal government lying in the management, regulation and inculcation of the agency of the governed – through which the incorporation of the third sector sees TSOs positioned as curating individuals and communities as capable of managing their own risk (see also Chandler & Reid, 2016). In this instance, TSOs are positioned as playing a role in the shaping of subjectivities, where their activity is implicitly employed as a means of shaping particular relations to the world in the subjects that encounter them. In this line of thinking, the subject and subjectivity are things that are dynamically formed and transformed – although typically viewed as an outcome of some process of social control that TSOs have somehow become increasingly wrapped up within.

Less work, however, has sought to explore exactly how TSOs curate and mediate these particular subjectivities. One of the limitations of this line of thinking is that it assumes practices of different TSOs are set within a static, complete and even diffusion of neoliberal rationalities and technologies. The danger here is that the explorations of the relationships between TSOs and subjectivity remain firmly in the domain of analytical categories, as opposed to empirical realities. Indeed, the favoured vocabulary of ‘enrolment’ and ‘enlistment’ of the third sector attempts to

combine the dual sense of self-formation as a process of being both a subject-of and subject-to (Barnett, 2005). Whilst it is relatively easy to adopt theories of governmentality to provide seemingly compelling accounts of the ways in which, for example, various styles of governance magically 'interpellate' and 'hail' new subjects into existence (see Thrift, 2000), less work has explored how actors working within gradually tightening governmentalities might be capable of soliciting space *for something else*. As Barnett (2005) emphasises, the recourse to this vocabulary of interpellation alongside that of enrolment and enlistment marks the point at which there is a problem in finding a connection between "...an open-ended sense of the enactment of power-relations and a sense of power as direction is closed down without any specification of the causal mechanisms through which these articulations are sustained" (p. 9). As such, critical questions remain about the various middles ranges of agency where, perhaps despite being pulled into the reaches of neoliberal contracting, for example, organisations demonstrate the strategic capacity to produce and mediate something other than what is expected.

The Disaster Context

Disaster events themselves have often been conceptualised by geographers as being marked by a movement between a sudden and violent loss of sense and an attempt to remake that sense. Pertinently, disasters don't come pre-equipped with meanings, but are subsequently put into discursive and narrative frameworks that attempt to make sense of its implications and effects. Clark (2005), in particular, contends that extreme events generate a kind of sheer disorder that "obliterates... every means of making sense of the world – from fences to footprints, photo albums to property records, ledgers to love letters" (p. 385). In this line of thinking, the rupturing of social rhythms and behaviours and the tearing away of the foundations that make life legible are followed by a period of insensibility – where the excess of the disaster event renders life unknown and, immediately anyway, intelligible.

The insensibility of the disaster event links with what Maurice Blanchot (1995) terms the 'gift' of the disaster. By this, Blanchot argues that the destruction of the disaster, and the rupture that it generates in the structures that give the world sense, are simultaneously generative. As Clark (2005) emphasises,

disasters tend to also have a sense of revealing and illuminating things, “...offering a guiding light, a clear path, a sense of direction” (p.384). In other words, what the event provides is paradoxically what the disaster also takes away. For geographers, the notion that disasters both throw existing structures into disarray and give rise to the new, has generated forms of enquiry that question the kinds of rationalities and subjectivities that are sought to be formed and embedded in response to the event. As Cupples and Glynn (2014) note, the profound rupture from the past that the disaster represents can create possibilities for the amplification and circulation of alternative and socially marginalised knowledges, voices, and perspectives that are capable of challenging the most established social and political narratives.⁵ In other instances, metanarratives of disasters have framed these events as engendering the possibility of new trajectories of development and stimulating the emergence of new kinds of social contracts (Pelling & Dill, 2010).

Despite these framings, a problem for theories of disaster politics in particular is the two-dimensional view of both political power and of geographical space. Predominantly, thinking about disasters ‘intellectually’ has seen significant attention focused towards the ways in which preparation for, management of and responses to disaster events have become wrapped up in the playing out of governmentalities that seek to synergise particular rationalities. The normative theoretical and methodological approach has been to explore the ways governmental technologies deploy rhetorics of disaster and emergency to ‘accelerate the status quo’ (Pelling & Dill, 2010) – the meta-narrative of the current time being the roll-out of hegemonic neoliberalisation that manifests in a kind of neoliberal, resilient subject (Chandler & Reid, 2016). In these instances, even when disasters ‘lay bare’ the inequities and limitations of the operating model of hegemonic ideology, the normative argument is that the political management of the disaster aftermath results in a “forceful display of orchestrated ideological cohesion” (Peck, 2006b, p. 122). Here, the laying bare of the limitations of power is argued not to represent an ideological fracture, but rather serves to feed and empower the problematically hybrid character of the ‘market revolution’ (Graetz & Shapiro, 2005). The dominant argument is that

⁵ See Castree (2010) for similar lines of enquiry, situated around the idea of ‘not letting a good crisis go to waste’.

employment of a prefabricated crisis narrative which, in conjunction with a hybrid of a range of conservative, libertarian, pro-business and neoliberal 'second-hand' ideas, presents the opportunity to craft a constructed neoliberal unity (Kotkin, 2006). In these cases, it appears that the disruption and chaos caused by disasters offers a route through which those 'in power' are given the capacity to reframe the landscape to fit specific political narratives (Klein, 2008). This hybridity seemingly makes it clear that the longer-run outcomes of disasters tend not to be a reversal, or even a midcourse adjustment, of the tenets of ideological governance but rather the playing out of an acceleration of extant programs of rule.

On the other side of the coin, in addition to the aforementioned work of Cupples and Glynn (2014), some accounts have begun to unpick the ways in which disasters rupture open political space for the contestation of political power, as well as reshaping state-society relationships. In these instances, orientation is generated towards the kinds of new political spaces or alternative discourses that are generated by the disaster (Cuny, 1983; Tironi, 2015). Here, attention has focused on the ways space is leveraged during the recovery process to stimulate widespread institutional change (Nakagawa & Shaw, 2004; Ozerdem & Jacoby, 2006). An inherent interest in this work is the extent to which disaster spaces become politicised in different ways, including whether it is populated by emergent or existing social organisations and how quickly the state and other dominant social actors respond (Pelling & Dill, 2010). Here, disasters tend to be framed as periods of heightened 'discursive and material competition', where a critical juncture of revolution or ideological entrenchment is eventually reached (Pelling & Dill, 2006). As such, these accounts tend to rely on an overly systematised theory of governmentality, where complex struggles and alternative politics of possibility are compounded by the theoretical and empirical limitations of conceptualisations that label activity as pugnaciously resisting apparent hegemonic projects of political endeavour. The implications of this is that disasters tend to be understood as extraordinary 'tipping points' where the final result is momentous and totalising, and the every-day forms of receptivity, pro-activity, and generativity through which these points are curbed and given momentum are often obscured.

Whilst the breadth of disaster literature itself suggests that disaster events and their management are important moments in unfolding political and social histories⁶, critical questions can still be raised about the contestations and claims that are made during these times. Framing disasters as a tipping point through which ideological structures either become deeply embedded or universally rejected does not sufficiently help us to imagine the transitions. It also risks cloaking the processes through which alternatives are realised, sought after and contested over. Clinging to the image of the powerful versus the powerless (including sudden transitions between the two) only makes it all the more difficult to acknowledge the possibility of positive political or social action that does not conform to a romanticised picture of rebellion, contestation, or protest against domination (Barnett, 2005; Touraine, 2001). Importantly, as Honig (2009) argues in her discussion on emergency politics, events that disrupt the status-quo prompt and reveal “hidden resources and alternative angles of vision” that stimulate action on a range of scales (p. XV). A singular focus on ‘governmentality’ in the disaster landscape, on the other hand, finds it difficult to recognise the emergence of new and innovative forms of collective action because critical imagination turns on a simple evaluative opposition between domination and resistance.

What the analytics of governmentality does not acknowledge is the degree to which the rationalities that govern strategic interactions are not necessarily pre-existing properties of the different actors involved, but are an emergent dimension of ongoing interaction itself (Bridge, 2005). The idea of looking at the *emergent rationalities* of interaction implies a different line of empirical questioning; one less concerned with uncovering governmental rationalities, and more focused on how the concatenation of strategic interests often leads to various forms of cooperative behaviour – including the bargaining, helping, compromising, and practices of re-appropriation that might go on within this (Barnett, 2005). It is with this in mind that this thesis focuses more extensively on the ways emergent

⁶ This argument has seen literature acknowledge, in various ways, a breaking down of the idea of a ‘natural disaster’ – including the recognition that such terminology draws on problematic social constructions of nature (see Homan, 2003; Oliver-Smith, 2012; Steinberg, 2003) and that our interpretation of disasters is often complexly entwined with underlying social/political conditions and response (see Collier, 2014; Dickel & Kindinger, 2015; Park & Miller, 2008). For the purpose of this thesis, where participants are often grappling with the non-human agencies of the disaster event, the term ‘natural disaster’ as an over-arching representation of the earthquakes is deliberately eschewed. It is, however, used as a point of reflection in places, particularly when participants are reflecting on these agencies in relation to their activities.

actors and subjects made and realised claims as to what the disaster represented. Rather than assuming that the earthquakes have led to a cultural or political revolution, or the reinstatement of a conservative system of governance, I instead wish to focus on the ways in which emergent subjects utilise the earthquake to make particular ethical, political and social claims. This intention is hoped to add nuance to the geographical disaster literatures that tend to caricature a simplistic image of the world divided between the forces of hegemony and the spirits of forceful subversion (Sedgwick, 2003). In the following section I briefly introduce the conceptual framework that aids in this intention.

Fidelity and Faithfulness

As with any thesis, there is an unseen story behind the research that shapes both the topic concerned and the conceptual lens through which it is framed. Much of what informs this project derives from my own experiences as an earthquake victim, a red-zoner and as both a situated and distant observer of the recovery landscape. My Masters research explored the experiences of red-zoners as they ‘performed’ relocation decisions, before I moved to Australia in 2013. I returned to New Zealand in 2014, before moving to Exeter to begin this research. These shifting proximities are explored in more depth in Chapter Four.

The choice to focus on TSOs stems from my engagements with many of these organisations in Christchurch as a service-user. In many instances, my own engagements and experiences differed dramatically from both, accounts of engagements with the third sector in my previous research and broader discourses circulating about the ‘selling out’ of emergent TSOs to government recovery ideologies. During this time, in conversation with both red-zone households and staff members within emergent TSOs, I became interested in the disparity between academic and media material on post-quake governmentality (most of which drew attention a seemingly unidimensional entrenchment of ‘neoliberalism’) and the apparent complex and contested day-to-day activities of emergent TSOs. For example, on the same day, I once encountered citizens who spoke of CanCERN as “heroes, fighting for the underdog” and “complete sell-outs...just doing the dirty work for CERA and EQC” (red-zone interviews, 02/02/2013). This led me to ask both ethical and methodological questions about how academic endeavour might focus in more depth on the actually existing

struggles of everyday life for these organisations, rather than assuming they are unwilling participants in broader attempts to restore a conservative status-quo. Taking this into account, each chapter in this thesis is an attempt to make sense of an aspect of post-disaster life by understanding the contestations that arise as different claims are made in the name of the earthquake – as well as exploring how these contestations are experienced and lived out by individuals and organisations.

It is this idea that ‘claims are made in the name of the earthquake’ that informs the use of the term ‘fidelity’ in this thesis. Fidelity, meaning *the act of being faithful* or *showing faithfulness to something/someone*, is a term that is conceptually attributed to Alan Badiou’s work on the philosophies of the event. Underpinning the use of it in this context is a conviction that the Canterbury earthquakes could be fruitfully be explored, in Badiou’s (2005) terms, as *evental* in nature (see Cloke, Dickinson, & Tupper, 2017). In short, Badiou conceptualises an event as social change that reveals (or makes possible) a realm of alternative possibilities that are generally excluded from or are undervalued within the hegemonic orthodoxy. In this sense, an event is significant because it ruptures the established order of things in a way that allows for the emergence of previously excluded excesses and voids (for example, ideas, vocabularies, practices) within the social arena – an event is an *event* because it expresses an ontological truth that is grounded in the (in)consistency of Being as multiple. Thus, that which was previously indistinguishable in the experience and representation of everyday life becomes exposed and enlivened by the event (Bassett, 2008; Dewsbury, 2007). As Meillassoux (2011) states,

An event is the taking place of a pure rupture that nothing in the situation allows us to classify under a list of facts... The novelty of an event is expressed in the fact that it interrupts the normal regime of the description of knowledge, that always rests on the classification of the well-known, and imposes another kind of procedure on whomever admits that, right here in this place, something hitherto unnamed really and truly occurred.
(p. 2)

Such an event (including geo-events such as earthquakes – see Shaw, 2012) opens up spaces which enable the possibility of new forms of knowledge and

subjectivity to emerge through *the practicing of faithfulness (or fidelity) to the nature and potential of the event*.

Within the framework of the event, Badiou (2005) describes fidelity as a performative acknowledgement through which we pledge ourselves to sustain a continuity of previously impossible thought and action. However, both his notion of the event and arguments about the emergence of a fidelity-induced subject have been received cautiously. Firstly, critiques of the event philosophy point towards the difficulties in determining what an event in this philosophy might actually look like. Certainly, Badiou's refusal of any causal connection between social reality, political decision (and political history) and event makes it an unhelpful philosophy to deploy empirically (Hallward, 2003). Badiou's reliance on mathematical ontology, and in particular use of set theory to theorise the inconsistent multiplicity of Being, does not lend itself easily to the complexities and histories that make up social and political landscapes – as Bryant (2008) points out, “mathematical truths, whether set-theoretical or otherwise, are truths of *essence*. Whether they apply to *existence* is another question” [emphasis added].

Secondly, Badiou's framing of fidelity as a 'moral imperative' has led to an evaluation that has been seen as an overly-deterministic and dogmatic view of causal agency. Critics of the event philosophy label it as simplistic in its presentation of a formalised and knowable picture of the emergence of a new reality/ordering of life to which people are somehow forcefully subject to (Sotiris, 2011). Clearly, any idea that such subjectivity and knowledge might be totalising opens up a critique about how the exceptionalness of the event simply leads to a potentially fascistic opportunity for regressive leadership to reassert its power and control by formulating new rationalities to which all are subject (see Cloke & Conradson, forthcoming).

Yet, I contend that the philosophy of the event (and the notion of fidelity) offers a series of critical gestures that aid in exploring how new forms of knowledge and subjectivity irrupt into the social and political scene. As James (2012) indicates, the notion of an 'event' has become a key theme in recent exchanges in modern political theory. Here, different interpretations of the event philosophy have sought to theorise and address the question of 'how' something new might enter

the world (Bassett, 2016) – moving beyond ideas and rhetorics of revolution to more thoroughly explore how “the emergence of the unexpected, the unforeseeable or the uncategorisable might challenge and transform an existing situation” (James, 2012, p. 2). In response to Badiou’s philosophy of event, for example, alternative accounts have emerged that describe a process of eventalisation, where the ‘event’ is slow and disorienting at the time, recognisable only according to the multiple and varied processes that both emanate from it and help to constitute it (see Biesta’s, 2008, reading of Foucault, for example). In this way, the event is best observed through consideration of how acting in line with the event affords opportunities for different performances and improvisations – either to extend the post-evental quasi-state or to make claims about what the event represents in the ongoing narratives of the landscape.

Pertinent to this thesis, others have focused more specifically on the notion of fidelity. For example, Mould (2009) exploration of urban parkour uses fidelity as a lens through which participant relationships with the city is given meaning – where the performance of parkour represents the emergence of an ontological fissure that shifts the architecture of the city, and the cityscape is embraced and reimaged in ways not previously possible (p.747). Alternatively, McCormack (2003) uses the context of Dance Movement Therapy to explore how fidelity is wrapped up within how new spaces of thinking and moving come into being. In these instances, these accounts nod towards, and draw from, Badiou’s philosophy of the event but do not clearly align themselves with its ontological underpinnings. Rather, these accounts draw attention to some of the ways that participants show a faithfulness to the shattering of the status quo – exploring how the event is retrospectively perpetuated by a fidelity that shifts it to something more than a mundane moment. Sitting behind these accounts is an assumption that it is through fidelity that more radical, alternative and progressive subjects and subjectivities might also emerge (O’Sullivan, 2012).

It would be erroneous to suggest that Badiou’s theory of the event and fidelity presents a precise ‘fit’ with what has happened after the Christchurch earthquakes.⁷ The intention of this thesis is not rigidly deploy Badiou’s philosophy of the event and ontological notion of the political onto the recovery landscape.

⁷ See Cloke et al. (2017) for a broader mapping of event theory in relation to the Christchurch post-quake landscape.

The earthquakes represent more objectively provable events, for one. However, employing the idea of fidelity raises a series of useful questions that enable exploration of how post-quake subjects aligned themselves with the nature and potential of the ruptures generated in the foundations and structures of the city. Yet, despite the contribution of a few select papers (see above) fidelity is, empirically, relatively unexplored within geography. An immediate concern here then, if fidelity is to be explored empirically, is to what or whom subjects are demonstrating faithfulness to. In the case of the Canterbury earthquakes, one could immediately question whether fidelity might be performed in relation to the *interruption* (of the status-quo) or a particular idea/shared understanding of how the rupture should be interpreted. These gaps in themselves raise queries as to whether fidelity is in itself spontaneous (and all-encompassing) or contrived (and consequently perhaps realised in contrasting, complex and contentious ways). A subsequent series of questions might be leveraged at how different subjects realise and enact these fidelities.⁸

Consequently, what I wish to consider in this thesis is that thinking about fidelity in a more cautious way might produce accounts of more varied palettes of subjectivity and knowledge, including that which harnesses energy and pivots it towards a more hopeful activism, capable of “collective creativity characterised by emotionally charged cultural improvisations in space” (Bassett, 2008, p. 905). This is to suggest that fidelity, in this instance, might be a lens through which organisational understandings of their role in the post-earthquake landscape might be better addressed. It offers a potential route away from the subversion-co-option dichotomy, in that it provides a way of thinking how different actors realise and enact claims that work to give the disaster event meaning. Importantly, through this lens, then, the Canterbury earthquakes might be understood not as ending with the earthquakes themselves, to be followed by post-event periods of recovery. Rather, the possibility of the earthquake event might continue, fuelled by emergent subjectivities that reflect an ongoing fidelity to the possibilities afforded by the rupture. As such, this thesis seeks not just to

⁸ This question has previously been raised by Bassett (2016), who contends that fidelity is a problematic concept, given that even if events enable the “...production of new, collective subjectivities, the processes whereby this occurs are barely touched upon” (p. 290).

provide an empirical exploration of how fidelity might be utilised as a lens to explore post-disaster (and more specifically, third sector) behaviours, but also offers an alternative reading of the Canterbury earthquakes themselves.

The Exeter-USF Project

It should be noted that the material presented in this thesis is drawn from independent research conducted after the Canterbury earthquakes. However, the studentship was joint-funded by a University of Exeter and University of South Florida (USA) research partnership. The project emanating from this partnership examined the role of third-sector organisations in mid-term recovery periods after disasters in New Zealand and the United States. The team consisted of one doctoral student (myself) and a staff member at Exeter, and one doctoral student and two staff members at USF. Driven by a desire to understand more about the unfolding carescapes beyond initial disaster relief, the project sought to broadly examine third-sector activity 2-4 years after initial disaster events. The implications and complexities of simultaneously being positioned within and outside the research team are discussed in Chapter Four.

1.4 Research Aims and Questions

The purpose of this thesis is in part to critically engage with the dominant perspectives that inform debate on the interconnections between TSOs and governmentality – paying particular attention to the strategic practices and positionings employed by TSOs in order to seek alternative political and social possibilities that emerge through a faithfulness to the interruption concerned. In doing so, it aims to present accounts of *fidelity* by exploring how subjects made sense of the post-disaster landscape, and subsequently work to perform and engrain claims as to what the earthquakes represented in the ‘new normal’ of Christchurch. This account seeks to both add nuance to the dominant readings of the Canterbury earthquakes and cut against arguments that TSOs must either be co-opted by hegemonic governmentalities or, conversely, work externally to resist and subversively counter these ideological projects. Instead I draw attention to the situated knowledges, practices and experimentations through which TSOs carve open space and work to create possibilities for the amplification and circulation of both emergent and repressed perspectives. My thesis consequently employs three lines of questioning:

Firstly, it aims to explore the spaces and practices through which post-disaster subjectivities are imagined, formed and remade. To address this aim, I explore the sorts of alternative senses of subjectivity that open out through the earthquakes. This involves considering the ways in which the earthquakes give rise to different kinds of political subjectivities, entrench existing ones, and evaluating the ways these might be linked to new practices of identity-formation. To do this I ask: *in what ways are responses to the earthquakes being framed to fit into narratives of hegemonic governmentality? Conversely, in what ways are the earthquakes being framed to fit into other kinds of narrative? What are the relationships between government responses to the earthquake and the formation of subjective dispositions post-quake? How are new events integrated into coherent narratives/ongoing storylines about what the earthquakes represented?*

This last question, in particular, seeks to enable investigation and reflection into the extent to which the earthquakes can be framed as a ‘rupture’ – considering whether subjectivities are shaped around the belief that the earthquakes represented a momentary line of flight away from the normative way-of-doing, the birth of something new and different in Christchurch, or perhaps something in between. Thus, I am concerned with the ways in which people and organisations integrate new events into narratives by exploring what kinds of practices, experiences and contestations work to shape and transform people’s subjectivities post-quake.

Secondly, this thesis aims to contribute to theoretical and empirical understandings of how fidelity is claimed, performed and mediated. In attending to this aim, I explore the ways in which performances of fidelity are wrapped up in post-quake life in Christchurch. To explore this contention, I ask: *How do individuals, organisations and institutions demonstrate fidelity to the earthquakes? In what ways are these fidelities realised? In what ways is the rubric of the earthquake used to mobilise alternative modes of action? And subsequently, do TSOs subsequently play a role in mediating how fidelity is performed in Christchurch?*

Such attention provides a more nuanced account of the complexities of post-quake life, drawing attention to the different kinds of claims that arise during the

recovery process. Here, I am interested in an analytics of post-quake life that looks at more than just what different actors *want* to happen, but rather how claims to what the earthquakes signify play out in a field of contestation against other actors with their own fidelities. Opening up, through attention towards the above questions, are lines of enquiry that seek to explore how organisations might be working to embed some of the social and political conditions that make up the recovering urban landscape, in the longer term future of the city.

Thirdly, this thesis aims to consider and evaluate how claims of fidelity might be co-constitutively woven into changing governmental and third sector relationships. Bringing together explorations of subjectivity and fidelity explored in the first two aims, I seek to explore how third sector activity might be more cautiously narrated. This involves looking more deeply at stories of accommodative compromise/co-option or pre-figurative opposition to state and private market apparatuses. In order to open out discussion around this aim, I ask: *What kinds of latent spaces of possibility for new societal relations are opened up through the earthquakes? To what extent does fidelity influence organisational engagements with institutional actors? How, exactly, do organisations articulate and rationalise their activity in relation to practices of governmentality? What kinds of (dis)engagements are prompted through particular governmental-third sector relationships?*

Addressing these questions enables a focus on the co-constitutive spaces of care, cooperation, and mutuality that are often viewed with suspicion by scholars and broader society alike. In this instance, I seek to explore emergent rationalities of interaction post-quake from an organisational perspective. This involves considering how different conceptual and empirical grammars might supplement understandings of third sector -government relationships. The intention here is to render visible the logics and processes at work as organisations go about re-assembling space and relations after the earthquakes. This focus also prompts reflection on the kinds of methodological tools that might be engaged with to explore how organisations *organise* space.

1.5 Thesis Outline

Given the aims and context of this research that I have detailed above, the thesis is structured as follows. Chapter Two explores accounts and imaginaries of the

third-sector itself, with particular attention given to the ways the sector has been positioned in relation to the state. Specifically, this chapter reflects upon orthodox accounts that place TSOs within analytical frameworks of roll-out neoliberalism – presented as the ‘little platoons’ of neoliberal governance. Within this chapter, I also present and question the emergence of contemporary geographies of the third-sector that have sought to construct more nuanced and progressive articulations of political practices and subjectivities that are springing up alongside, and in response to, dominant political ideologies.

Chapter Three shifts attention to the disaster landscape in particular by exploring how third-sector contributions to disaster response and recovery have been theoretically and empirically mapped. I question the ways in which the third-sector has been associated with the co-construction of neoliberalised subjectivities in the face of adversity and uncertainty, including a consideration of how such activity has been critiqued as contributing to the reinstatement of a more resilient version of the established political orthodoxy. In the latter half of this chapter, and in questioning the normative argument of a gradual tempering of the creative potential of disaster events, I integrate my own observations and literature to paint Christchurch as a ‘ruptured city’. There, I reflect upon the ways the earthquakes have represented a profound rupture from the past and raised the possibility for radically alternative futures.

Chapter Four introduces and discusses the research methods used within the research. It also provides the situated ethics, knowledges and proximities that both shaped methodological decision making and the embodied experience of doing research itself. This chapter explores the shifting critical proximities involved in the research and writing up processes, and reflects on how the project itself (as well as decisions around research direction) were inherently shaped by my own fidelity to the earthquakes. The chapter also engages with a series of critical discussions concerning the appropriateness of doing disaster research and reflects upon the implications and experiences of my decision to work for participant organisations – including reflecting upon tensions and difficulties that arose during these placements.

Chapter Five – the first of three empirically focused chapters – explores findings from a study conducted with red-zone households after they were forced to

relocate as a result of a compulsory state zoning scheme. Including more discursive discourse analysis of the post-quake landscape, this chapter begins to chart the ways in which the third-sector (both existing and emergent) were becoming wrapped up within discourses that heralded post-quake community, altruism and support in the city. In doing so, I draw upon narratives from red-zone households that point towards perceived failings of the existing third-sector and state to provide services that resonated with the emergence of a new normal in Christchurch. I consider how disjunctures between state generated discourses of a homogenous 'Canterbury Spirit' and the lived experiences of disaster recovery prompted specific acts and performances of fidelity amongst participants. These performances of fidelity, I contend, led to new forms of social and political engagement that sought to embed a particular representation of the earthquakes in the reassembling city – and also significantly contributed to the emergence of the organisations explored in the following two empirical chapters.

Chapter Six explores perceptions and performances of fidelity in relation to one emergent organisation, the Canterbury Communities' Earthquake Recovery Network (CanCERN). The analytical focus of this chapter is to explore how fidelity might be viewed through organisational activity and to examine how this particular TSO realised and performed understandings of their 'place' in the post-quake landscape. My consideration in this chapter is to question the value in exploring CanCERN as something more than an 'earthquake organisation' – and instead it examines the ways through which alternative ethical and political possibilities were prompted and given momentum through the rubric of earthquake recovery. Focusing, in particular, on the initiatives through which CanCERN formed relationships with local and national state bodies, private insurance companies and also on the closure of the organisation in 2015, this chapter seeks to unpick the organisational fidelities (and the practices and rationalities that consisted this) that guided the ways they embedded themselves in the post-quake landscape.

Chapter Seven explores a series of emergent organisations that I have collectively termed the 'city-making' organisations. Involved in the creation of temporary aesthetic arenas in the devastated city-centre, these organisations have been working to prompt specific kinds of collective response-ability through novel and participatory uses of urban space. I explore how these TSOs have brought forth a series of previously lesser-noticed ethical and aesthetic ideas and

performative practices relating to transitional urbanism. Here, I examine the reshaping of the city's urban environment that has been occurring via these creative and performative projects, and discuss how the particular ethical and aesthetic componentry of these organisations is being weaved into the more permanent fabric of the city. I also consider the extent to which these organisations may be fostering aesthetically-connective interventions that invite, encourage and impart an extension of their interpretation, and fidelity to, the earthquakes.

Chapter Eight concludes the thesis by discussing how the key findings of the research speak back to theories and discourses introduced in the first half of this thesis. It offers evaluations of the potential impacts of this work – both in relation to future accounts of third-sector activity and in examining the longer-term earthquake landscape in Christchurch.

Imageries of the Third Sector

2.1 Introduction

This thesis is concerned with the changing nature of third sector activity after a series of earthquakes in Christchurch. It builds off the initial observation that the emergent third-sector represented a series of spaces through which alternative and collective responses to the earthquakes were organised. As identified in Chapter One, these emergent organisations initially appeared to represent the breaking free of the shackles of conservative governance. In doing so, they appeared to be fanning the flames of agonism and creating momentum for something more *hopeful* through the rubric of the earthquakes. Yet, as already pointed to (and drawn out in-depth in this thesis), these organisations have simultaneously been placed, by academics and media alike, within the gaps left by shrinking public provision and, more broadly, positioned as new subjects within the roll-out of a political strategy that delegated risk, responsibility, and accountability from the state onto others.

This chapter serves to situate these discourses within broader accounts of the third-sector and governmentality. It aims to present and explore some of the ways the third-sector has been conceptualised and explored empirically, with particular attention given to the ways its activity is analysed in relation to the ideologies of the state. More specifically, this chapter begins by reflecting upon orthodox accounts of TSOs that place them within analytical frameworks of roll-out neoliberalism – presented as the ‘little platoons’ of neoliberal governance, caught up in the decentralisation of state structures and subsequently enrolled into the governmentalisation of the sector through its multifarious technologies.

However, the purpose of this chapter is not to simply demonstrate the messiness of the sector and reiterate the broad relationships between neoliberalism and the third-sector – this territory has been already covered extensively. Rather I wish

to draw attention to recent calls to 'read for difference' to narrate the emergence of contemporary geographies of the third-sector. These calls sought to construct more nuanced and progressive articulations of the political practices and subjectivities that are springing up alongside formations of the neoliberal (see Gibson-Graham, 2006; May & Cloke, 2014). To illustrate these emerging narratives, the main body of this chapter traces how emergent 'progressive localism' literatures complicate the idea of organisations working solely within or outside of the tenets of neoliberal governance. Recognising neoliberalism as a series of messy and contested assemblages, I explore the different ways third-sector activity has been re-evaluated in terms of its potential for developing progressive responses to neoliberal excesses.

In doing so, I draw attention towards the shifting modes of attentiveness within the geographies of the third-sector that inform this thesis, as well as highlighting an avenue of concern that drives my empirical enquiry. I contend that despite more recent attunement towards the latent spaces of possibility that open up to rework and challenge political rationalities and ideologies, less work has yet examined the everyday practices, performances and rationalities through which organisations actually leverage these possibilities. In doing so, I reflect on initial observations of emergent third-sector activity in post-quake Christchurch, and point towards more fluid and discursive movements within and outside of 'state spaces' that suggest the active forming of complex, dynamic and multifarious relationships with the state.

2.2 Making Sense of the Sector

It is important to begin by noting that, just as third-sector organisations vary significantly in their activity and makeup, the notion of what defines the third-sector, and the labels that are used to describe it, vary significantly. I wish to begin this chapter by introducing and conceptualising the sector as a moving beast by focusing on the various ways it has been multifariously conceptualised as a *responsive* container for certain kinds of collective and, importantly, 'bottom-up' action.

Firstly, there is a wide array of vocabulary that has been employed at different times to describe the notion of a third sector. Each of these are set within different traditions, contexts and narratives (Lewis & Kanji, 2009). Other common terms

include non-profit/not-for-profit organisation, nongovernment/nongovernmental organisation, community organisation, civil society organisation and voluntary organisation. Each term is linked with specific cultural and political histories. In the United Kingdom, for example, the term 'voluntary association' has strong association owing to the fact that these organisations are values for their principles of charity, mutuality and self-government (Milligan & Fyfe, 2004). In New Zealand, the term 'community organisation' is more common parlance, given that groups in such spaces are presumed to have both knowledge *of* and knowledge *about* communities that the state cannot access (Larner & Craig, 2005). As later explored through my empirical narrative, the term 'third-sector organisation' is not a common terminology within the day-to-day activities of organisations, but is used in this thesis given the ways the complex and vastly dissimilar activities of emergent organisations is joined by a purposeful and avowed distinction from the state and private market.⁹

The commonly held defining characteristics of the third-sector are that the activities of its organisations are privately controlled yet do not exist primarily to earn a profit (Evers, 1995). Groups in the sector are also classified as organisations "...that are value-driven and which principally reinvest their surpluses to further social, environment or cultural objectives" (Cabinet Office, 2007). TSOs exist primarily to serve others, to provide goods or services to those in need and exhibit some aspect of voluntary action, behaviour or shared commitment of purpose. They are generally argued to be privately run, constituted bodies, working to serve some form of ubiquitous public or community good (Smock, 2003). Terms such as altruism, charity, community, mutuality and the ethic of giving and caring are often used to define the values which make the third-sector distinctive from the market and state (Evans & Shields, 2000, p. 89). Given these attributes, TSOs are often characterised as a formalised, organisational representation of civil society, or of its interests (Billis, 2010).

Pertinently, TSOs are generally placed as operating in a tension field between the state, the market and the more informal, community sphere. The third-sector

⁹ As touched upon later in this thesis, this marked positioning has led to the emergence of the term 'third-sector' post-quake, however. It is a term that can be seen discursively through publications on emergent organisations – most specifically in regards to the emergent network 'One Voice Te Reo Kotahi', who market themselves as 'speaking from the third-sector' (see <http://onevoicetereokotahi.blogspot.co.uk/p/about-one-voice-te-reo-kotahi.html>).

has widely become identified as an intermediary or mediating sector located between other actors (Kenny et al., 2017). This interpretation sees the sector represented a series of spaces through which the individual and the state are separated – subsequently ensuring dissent, diversity and accountability exists in modern democracies. In a similar vein, Salamon & Anheier (1996) more specifically locate the third-sector between the private market and state, drawing attention to the three ‘spheres’ of social and political life. Meanwhile, Evers (1995) illustrates the sector as existing within the spaces between the state, the market and private households (and uses the area inside a triangle in order to visualise this). From a socio-political perspective, this works to demonstrate the various ways in which TSOs influence and are influenced: they are simultaneously shaped by state policies and legislation, the practices of private business, the culture of civil society and the concerns of individual citizens (Evers & Laville, 2004).

Most significantly, the characterisation of TSOs being a formalised and visible representation of civil society has seen significant bodies of geographical work acknowledge the ways these organisations foster social and political engagements. Over the past 50 years or so, the third-sector has attracted growing attention as a key site for nurturing both active citizenship and political engagement on a range of scales (Fyfe, 2005). On one hand, arguments have been put forward that more welfare-orientated organisations have generated opportunities to represent community concerns and needs within other spheres (Brown et al., 2000). This has included the representation, that through third-sector (or NGO/non-profit/other guises) activity, economic and social issues are brought to the fore and subsequently responded to through responsive policy-making. In these instances, rhetorics of ‘depth of community’ and ‘in touch with the needs of community’ are often used to characterise the ways in which TSOs are placed within attempts to develop deeper and more effective forms of democratic governance (Cohen & Rogers, 1992; Edwards, 2004; Hirst, 1994).

On the other hand, these approaches have examined the forms of active citizenship that TSOs engender. The proposition here is that organisations contribute to the reinvigoration of civil society. For example, Brown et al. (2000) argue that faced with fears around declining political engagement and worries about shifting patterns of governmentality, that TSOs has become theorised as

“...place[s] where politics can be democratised, active citizenship strengthened, the public sphere reinvigorated and welfare programmes suited to pluralist needs designed and delivered” (p. 57). Similarly, Jessop (2002) argued that TSOs have become a central focus of neo-communitarian strategies for addressing problems of social exclusion at a local level – contributing to emergent capacities for sociality and politically engaged co-operation and critique (see also Warren, 2001). In this vein, Nancy Fraser (1992) theorised that the organisations that make-up civil society provide one vehicle through which subaltern counter-publics work to recognise and legitimise the struggles of dispossessed and marginalised groups, providing sites and spaces through which individuals can find the encouragement and support necessary to become active citizens (see also Dryzek, 2002). Subsequently, much attention has been paid to the ways the third-sector exists as a site for citizen mobilisation and an arena for the deliberation of issues of public concern (Edwards, 2004).

This position within the intermediary areas of the different spheres of social and political life has seen the sector regarded as a potential barometer of concern and change (Kenny et al., 2017). Its experiences of trying to make sense of the dilemmas inherent within the intermediate space that it occupies – reflecting bottom-up concerns, managing top-down tactics of governance, reconciling different interests, releasing resources in innovative ways – are in part what makes the sector a complex and shifting beast. Most visibly, this can be seen through the myriad of organisations that make up the sector. Significant variation is evident in the organisational structure, activities and approach organisations that occupy the third-sector – including increasingly significant differences between larger, professionalised and more obviously corporatist organisations and smaller, often local, volunteer-based services (Parsons & Broadbridge, 2004). These organisations include professionalised welfare providers, such as organisations contracted by the state to provide care services to homeless populations (see Cloke, May & Johnsen, 2010), as well as more small-scale outfits, such as the increasing third-sector takeovers of former local government initiatives that run neighbourhood-level programmes as social enterprises (see Williams, 2003).

Additionally, the designation of the third-sector as a ‘mediating field’ through which the representation of the interests of citizens is maintained, means that the

organisations that constitute the sector are also fluid and ever-changing. Often, organisations emerge as situated articulations of political agency, discord or need (Child & Gronbjerg, 2007). In some instances, these organisations are illustrated as local articulations of broader movements that push for social change (such as emergent TSOs working to instil aspects of the Transition Town movement, for example)¹⁰. In others, the third-sector exists as a space where embryonic networks emerge out of welfare voids or concerns about the lack of ‘bottom-up’ engagement in local/national affairs. For example, Onyx and Leonard (2010) draw attention to the emergence of cooperative TSOs in Maleny (southeast Queensland, Australia) in the face of perceived lack of attention from the local and national state – simultaneously providing needed welfare services and working to highlight the plights of rural populations amidst broader political cutbacks. Here, organisations emerged both as a way of meeting community needs *and* as a side-effect of ongoing rhizomic movements.

As such, the activity of the third-sector is inherently shaped by the actions of the other spheres they operate in between. In particular, significant bodies of work have sought to unpick the ways in which the directives and policy agendas of the state shape both the activity and composition of the third-sector (for example: Fyfe, 2005; Jessop, 2002; Wendy Lerner & Craig, 2005; Milligan & Fyfe, 2004; Newman, 2014). In more recent times, the dominant narrative here has been one of increased professionalisation of the third-sector in the face of the continued retreat of the state. Whilst this has operated in different ways, at different scales, the third-sector has largely been painted as a series of spaces at the mercy of state-led legislation and intervention (Cornwall, 2004). Incorporated into this are concerns about the potential stripping of radical political activism and engagement described above, and a broader struggle for organisations that do not fall within particular mandates to be recognised by the social spheres they seek to shape.

In what follows, I wish to pick up this last theme and explore in more depth accounts of the intersection of governmentality in the third-sector. In this section I have sought to briefly introduce some of the literatures that conceptualise the spaces of the third-sector. In doing so, I have not attempted to absolutely map

¹⁰ See Bailey, Hopkins, & Wilson (2010).

the third-sector in all its vagaries¹¹, but have rather worked to explore the idea that the sector itself is complex, multifarious and constantly in the act of becoming – responding to the needs and concerns of citizens, but also shaped and influenced by other social actors as well.

2.3 The Neoliberal Orthodoxy

Recently, geographers have paid significant attention to understanding the role that the third-sector plays within broader political and social ecologies. Much of this attention has focused on the relationships between the third-sector and state and, in particular, the incorporation of the third-sector into current systems of government and their entailing ideologies (see Williams, Goodwin, & Cloke, 2014). The prevalent social science narrative of the role that TSOs plays within these ecologies typically positions them as victims, and in some cases collaborators, who are caught up in the neoliberal incorporation of voluntary resources (Goode, 2006; Hackworth, 2009; Lyon-Callo, 2008; Peck, 2006; Williams, 2012). They are generally spoken of as becoming more integrated into welfare state apparatus in response to the ongoing privatisation of state functions under neoliberal restructuring (Kodras, 1997; Trudeau & Veronis, 2009). This integration is argued to be driven by TSOs occupying the space left by retreating state activity – a dominant characteristic of neoliberal governance (Billis & Harris, 1992; Bondi, 2005; Deakin, 1995; Fyfe & Milligan, 2003a, 2003b; Harris, 1995; Owen & Kearns, 2006; Williams, 2012; Wolch, 1990).

In particular, Peck & Tickell (2002) have argued that neoliberalism entails both ‘roll-back’ and ‘roll-out’ manoeuvres through which the diverse and complex ideologies of neoliberalism might be best seen. Here, ‘roll-back’ describes a contracting of the welfare safety net as described above, which can be seen most visibly through the ongoing circumscription of state presence in the social sphere. Alternatively, ‘roll-out’ argues the embedding of new discourses of social/welfare reform that engenders “...new institutional arrangements designed to ‘contain’ or ‘discipline’ marginalised and socially excluded people and non-governmental organisations” (Williams, 2012, p. 31). As such, the prevalent argument in regards to the third-sector is an increase in partnerships between governments and TSOs (often manifested through the proliferation of a contracting culture) that has been

¹¹ See for (Evers & Laville (2004) an extensive overview

typically viewed as an embodiment of roll-out neoliberalism – where the responsibility for provision of welfare, amongst other activity, is increasingly enlisted to non-state actors.

This roll-out of neoliberal governance has unfolded differently across national contexts, yet TSOs appear to have adopted almost common roles in this process (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). Of particular note and relevance to this thesis, the growing influence of TSOs in a range of activities have been charted in both the United Kingdom and New Zealand, where governments have introduced unprecedented sets of reforms to welfare, public services, and local governance (Nowland-Foreman, 1998). Most recently, in the United Kingdom in particular, rubrics of ‘localism’ have sought to reconfigure the geographical division of political powers by shifting power away from the central state to other actors (Goldfinch & Roberts, 2013; Wills, 2016). These rhetorics push the devolution of power in order to enable local communities and citizens to take ‘active’ roles in their communities – shifting responsibility away from the state through the vision of a society empowered from the bottom up (Ishkanian & Szreter, 2012). Importantly, the core tenets of neoliberalism – including the associated public service reform, encouragement of social enterprises and TSOs amidst broader patterns of decentralisation – have seemingly slowly been crystallised into policy through these policy shifts, in a way that has given rise to the presence of the third-sector within former state space on a global scale (Williams et al., 2014).

With this in mind, the increasing presence of TSOs has often situated them both within the gaps left by shrinking public provision and, more broadly, as new subjects for a political strategy that delegates risk, responsibility, and accountability from the state onto others. This shift has had direct and operational implications for the third-sector. In particular, accompanying this delegation has been the entrenchment of government regulatory mechanisms, such as performances targets and financial audits, to ensure that state goals are met and aspects of control and instruction are maintained (Larner & Craig, 2005). This enlisting of established organisations into neoliberal governance metrics, however, is argued to result in a diminishment of organisational autonomy as pressure to meet specific practices and goals is introduced (Barnes, Newman, & Sullivan, 2006; Billis & Harris, 1992; DiMaggio & Anheier, 1990; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Harris, 1995; Salamon & Anheier, 1996; Smith & Lipsky, 1993;

Wolch, 1990). In many instances, accounts illustrate TSOs as shaping or redirecting activity in order to chase financial security, often in competition with other organisations and institutions (Dattani, 2012; Macmillan et al., 2013). Subsequently, individual organisations are often framed as pseudo-governmental bodies caught up in the enrolment and governmentalisation of the broader third-sector (Peck & Tickell, 2002).

Despite opening up opportunities for organisations ‘informed by civil society’ to play a role in the provision of social services, this entwinement of the third-sector with neoliberal governance has largely been viewed through a critical lens. As Williams et al. (2014) argue, orthodox analytics of neoliberalism have commonly portrayed this shift towards neoliberal architectures in quite absolute terms: “as an utterly regressive dilution of local democracy; as an extension of conservative political technology by which state welfare is denuded in favour of market-led individualism; and as a further politicised subjectification of the charitable self” (p. 2798). More specifically in relation to the third-sector, Newman (2014) suggests that neoliberal governance attempts to manufacture innovative imageries of the public that gives legitimacy to the notion of the failed state and embeds the notion that political solutions and engagements should be sought after in spaces outside of the state. Here rhetorics of third-sector engagement by the state are argued to contribute to the negation of the need for collectivism and contributes to a project of furthering state inaccessibility by placing the third-sector at the face of care and welfare services (see also Evers, 1995). Consequently, TSOs are often critiqued as “little platoons...in the service of neoliberal goals” (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 390), as they go about filling the gaps created by the retreating welfare state.

A key concern with this line of critique, however, is the apparent effortlessness through which programmes of governance are assumed to be neoliberal, and that subsequent policies and frameworks are accepted as straightforwardly giving rise to neoliberally-induced subjects. With this thinking, the social sphere (including the third-sector) is subsequently often only considered as a contextual factor shaping the variability and manifestations of neoliberalisation, or whatever the dominant ideology may be. Subsequently, investigations of TSOs have been argued as “lend[ing] itself to a kind of cookie-cutter typification or explanation, a tendency to identify any program with neo-liberal elements as essentially neo-

liberal” (Rose, O’Malley & Valverde, 2006, p. 97-98). In such cases, the third-sector is generally only viewed as an arena for subjectification – positioned as a powerless actor swept up into shifting modes of governance and the ongoing changing nature of governmental technologies (Williams, 2012).

Arguments are emerging, however, that critique accounts of neoliberalism – arguing that the roll-out of ideological strategies and policies is neither hegemonic nor complete – in turn suggesting that accounts of top-down subjectification perhaps paint a totalising picture of social and political life. In particular, an emergent body of work has sought to critique neoliberalism as something other than a self-evident totality, arguing instead that it is an assemblage of disparate and precarious arrangements that exist side by side with residual arrangements from previous ideologies and contextual influences (DeVerteuil, 2016; Hodgkinson, 2011; Lerner, 2003). In the same vein, May and Cloke (2014) argue that neoliberal ideologies are best understood not as coming under a singular cohesive or hegemonic project, but rather as messy and precarious fabrications of forms and practices that always remains open to various kinds of translation, adaptation and resistance (see also Barnett, 2005). Similarly, Castree (2006) contends that instead of the embedding of some kind of ‘monstrous’ project of neoliberalism, such ideologies instead play out in localised, contingent and often contradictory ways.

The implications for accounts of the third-sector, here, is a call for forms of theoretical and empirical tentativeness – ensuring that researchers do not assume that the locally contextualised practices of TSOs enacting care or otherwise will simply mirror the neoliberal environment in which those contexts are staged. Similarly, Conradson (2008) specifically warns against this temptation to interpret TSOs solely through the conceptual lens of pseudo-governmental normalisation and neoliberal subjectification. He instead calls for closer empirical scrutiny of the organisational and ethical precepts that have helped reform practices. These calls emerge from the recognition that the unevenness and incompleteness of the roll-out and implementation of neoliberal ideologies leaves both ethical and political openings through which spaces of alterity and resistance might be worked. Crucially, this recognition renders neoliberalism and its processes of reproduction inherently fragile and open to contestation (Lerner & Craig, 2005).

In what follows, I wish to present recent accounts of third-sector activity that consider and reflect on the presence and playing out of something 'more' than neoliberal subjectification. These accounts build on the above realisations of neoliberalism and governances as a form of assemblage and resultantly work to narrate the latent spaces of possibility that are opening up through shifting and becoming political architectures. In doing so, I raise a series of questions about how these accounts place TSOs within and outside of the formations of the state, and point towards the need for a more nuanced exploration of how organisations consciously carve open spaces to enact these possibilities.

2.4 New Imageries and Narrations

In response to the wave of reforms that have said to represent a global roll-out of neoliberal ideologies, geographers have been shifting attention to the more micro-spaces through which the technologies of the state shape, and are shaped by, local actors. Much of this research has undertaken the task of focusing analytical attention towards the deconstruction of top-down neoliberal ideologies in two ways. Firstly, geographers have been working to reconceptualise neoliberalism in a way that shifts attention towards its inherent fragility and messiness. The key acknowledgement here is that neoliberalism might be understood not as a coherent, hegemonic project, but rather as an uneven and contested set of assemblages (Williams et al., 2014; Larner, 2000; Anderson et al., 2012). Secondly, and following these framings, geographers have also explored the ways in which neoliberal assemblages are constructed, contested and negotiated; examining the existing struggles through which something more complicated than neoliberal subjectification of the third-sector might be playing out (Barnes & Prior, 2009; Elwood, 2006; May & Cloke, 2014). In attempts to break down normative arguments of the neoliberal subjectification of the third-sector, this has involved unpicking the spaces, actors and practices that foster seemingly represent neoliberal logics and alternatives to them (Featherstone, Strauss, & Mackinnon, 2015).

This analytical work has built an image of the third-sector as contributing something more than accommodative compromise or confrontational opposition to the state apparatus. It acknowledges the ways in which the third-sector represents a series of spaces through which new ethical and political

mobilisations might be given credence in the face of changing state architectures (see Barraket, 2001).

Given the unevenness of the retreat of the welfare state, attention has been given to the ways in which localised practices of reworking and experimentation spring up in order to foster alternative ethical and political ends. Foucault, in particular, makes a call to shift the analytical focus in explorations of social life, and subsequently theorise the field of social institutions as a “vast experimental field”, through which actors are constantly making decisions as to “...which taps need turning, which bolts need to be loosened...in order to get the desired change” (1988, p.165). Additionally, Ferguson (2011), argues for a more cautious analysis of power within civil society organisations. He proposes a ‘left’ art of analysis that might be more attentive to the ways in which state policies and technologies are experimented with and, ultimately, reappropriated to fit particular contexts and needs. Examining social institutions, in this way, may mean not seeking to articulate how they refuse power, but rather how they deliberately choose to negotiate and respond to it in a way that could be provisional, reversible and open to surprise.

Furthermore, Bucek & Smith (2000) have called for the development of a shift away from defining organisations and movements in relation to what they are opposed to, with the belief that this normative narration of responses to governance results in a clear analytical silencing of the diverse and socially heterogeneous constituencies that can be active in shaping alternative subjectivities ‘from below’. As Barnett (2015) argues, the standard paradigm for exploring creative forms of public action has been to paint a picture of panicked response to the uncertainty or risk associated with the top-down ideological bearings of the time. Instead, he contends, there is space for the consideration of the possibility of response, experimentation and critique from organisations made up of citizens who are more than “...affectively attuned automatons or always cowered by fear” (p. 268). For instance, in questioning whether neoliberal contracting landscapes produce and replicate neoliberal subjectivities, Pudup (2008) argued that collective community gardening initiatives in San Francisco represent powerful structured spaces that also shaped and produced new individual and collective subjectivities that questioned and subverted “the basis of citizen rights and collective obligation” (p. 1239).

The acknowledgement of the playing out of something more, or something more complex, than the entrenchment and reproduction of neoliberal ideologies can be seen in strands of work that explore more hopeful reconfigurations of public life in the third-sector, including the emergence of democratic critique within seemingly state controlled spaces. For example, Freedom's (2009) work on the languages of political support draws attention to the myriads of ways the public realm and civil society feeds back narratives of compliance and resistance to the state in the face of the roll-out of new political endeavours. In his argument, the practices that occur in the civil society entities operate as semantic vehicles through which various discursive practices bestow intelligibility on political projects. In this vein, the practices and rationalities of organisations are more important than its situatedness within the political agenda. It is the organisation that contributes to creating a complex field through which particular ideologies are given sustenance, energy and momentum.

Relatedly, Barnett's (2015) attentiveness towards spaces of public action that consist of citizens with creative potential counters top-down accounts of governmentality that only ever sees the 'subject' as either as an effect of programmes of rule or as dissolved into flows of neoliberalised affect (see p. 267). In drawing attention to something more than this, two preliminary lines of enquiry can be found in relation to the third-sector. Firstly, geographers are beginning to acknowledge the ways in which the practices and performances of organisations are derivative of the ethical agency and decision-making of staff. Williams (2012), in particular, draws attention to how staff within TSOs have the capacity to co-produce, subvert and resist governmentalities and top-down directives in a way that gives rise to alternative performances of care and resistance. Similarly Owen & Kearns (2006) focus upon the acts of individual members of staff that deliberately contravene and challenge organisational positions as the subject of neoliberalism – giving rise to complex and often contradictory engagements with the citizens who engage with them.

Secondly, focusing more specifically on the ways in which these ethical agencies are collectively represented, Einsiedel (2008) points towards the creativity of 'civic epistemologies' that emerge in the face of state policy-making. Here, the argument lies in the idea that the automatic response to pervasive governmentality is not necessarily the morphing of a subject that simply rolls over

and accepts. Rather, top-down rhetorics work to feed the development of more dialogic and cooperative modes of response amongst citizens (see also Barnett, 2015; Jasanoff, 2012). The result here is the opening out of arguments that impel geographers to explore organisational subjects as creative, engaged and responsive, and therefore capable of developing sensibilities and practices that work strategically, even subversively, within the fissures and cracks of the political landscape at hand (Williams et al., 2014). Crucially, in relation to this thesis, these acknowledgements have moved to examine organisations (and, admittedly, any broader social institution) not solely as spaces of submissive compromise/co-option, but rather as situated within a more nuanced landscape of political, social and ethical possibilities.

In the remainder of this chapter, I reflect on some of these accounts that begin to conceptualise the third-sector as being wrapped up in the creation of interstitial spaces of hope and lines of flight that articulate counter-narratives to top-down rhetorics of governmentality. Despite being labelled 'insider' and 'outsider' organisations, the following two sections begin to chart the ways in which these stringent positionalities are challenged through the positing of neoliberalism as a complex, messy and uneven set of assemblages. It builds on existing geographical historical lineage that recognises the messiness of the struggle for hegemony and the entanglement of resistance and subversion.¹² Specifically, I critically review recent 'progressive localism' literatures that, in recognising neoliberalism as a set of messy assemblages, seeks to theorise and empirically explore the ethical and political spaces through which various forms of interstitial politics of experimentation have sprung up. Subsequently, the following two sections explore how these discussions problematize ideas of a stringently positioned organisation in relation to top-down political ideologies, before the following section (*Putting 'Progressive' Interpretations to Work*) begins to question the relevance of these framings to the Christchurch context.

Interstitial Spaces of Political Possibility

Addressing the notion that political projects are inherently complex assemblages and, therefore, fragile, bodies of geographical work have begun to explore the

¹² See, for example, contemporary Gramscian literature that empirically explores hegemony and subversion, such as that by Alex Loftus & Fiona Lumsden (2008).

cracks that exist in the in the landscape of governance for emergent ethical and political spaces that appear to work against the dominant ideological concerns of the neoliberal. The focus here is on forms of reworking and resistance that occur within seemingly politically controlled spaces as TSOs are brought into the trappings of the state. The dominant line of enquiry within these approaches sees attempts to identify the matrix of possibilities for more progressive reappropriations and alternatives to emerge within the confines of neoliberal governmentality, often through the exploitation of political openings and inconsistencies created by the messy and uneven roll-out of political agendas (Clarke & Cochrane, 2013). Most specifically, for the third-sector, these approaches have sought to draw attention to the practices of organisations that prompt and encourage alternative political and social sensibilities with the tools at hand – recognising TSOs not as automatic spaces of acquiescence, but rather as having the capacity to produce alternative “politics of possibility within [and around] the vicissitudes of neoliberal governance” (Williams et al., 2014, p. 2799).

For example, geographers have begun to explore how neoliberally driven policy in the United Kingdom, marketed through rubrics of ‘localism’, have opened up both ethical and political spaces through which alternative politics, moments of resistance and social experimentation have been performed. Williams et al. (2014) theorise the different ways the neoliberal ‘arts’ of government can be detached from neoliberal ideology (i.e. demonstrating that the roll-out of ideological projects are inherently uneven and fragile). This detachment is argued to give rise to a matrix of possibilities for ‘progressive’ actors to “...enact new worlds within the confines of neoliberal governmentality, in some cases reappropriating technologies and exploiting political openings created by austerity localism” (p. 2810).

Meanwhile, Wills (2016) draws attention to the ways in which rhetorics of localism, through the 2010 Conservative flagship policy ‘Big Society’¹³, generated the motivation and potential capacity for political organisation and agency. In her

¹³ The argument behind Big Society was a state response to the notion that ‘Big Government’ had promoted selfish individualism and passive dependency, perpetuating ‘social pathologies’ of a ‘Broken Britain’. Big Society, therefore, envisaged devolution of power to enable local communities and individuals to take an active role in their communities (Williams et al., 2014).

account, Wills describes that neoliberally motivated policy simultaneously enables the capacity to create more permanent forms of civic infrastructure that not only engendered the opportunity for politicians and citizens to act in relation to place, but also saw the emergence of change (at a local level) that did not necessarily align with neoliberal logics (see also Jupp, 2012). Most specifically, this saw funding allocated through Big Society policy give rise to neighbourhood groups that increased participation at a local level and a broader awareness of the political system and its responsibilities. In these instances, the authors argue that the spaces of mutualism and self-organisation that have attracted widespread critique as contributing to the development of neoliberal-subjects might in fact represent the opening up for more progressive forms of community organisation.

As previously referred to, Featherstone et al. (2012) outline an agenda for what they term *progressive localism*. They suggest that, despite dominant politicised narratives, there is space to understand community responses as outward-looking. Building on work by Mackinnon et al. (2011) they argue that increased reliance on civil society/third sector organisations has seen the employment of strategies that create positive affinities between places and social groups negotiating concerns and insecurities within social, political and economic life. Here the label of 'progressive' is used to shift attention away from struggles that might once have been described as merely 'defensive' and instead focuses on strategies that are "...expansive in their geographical reach and productive of new relations between places and social groups" (Featherstone et al., 2012, p. 179). Attention to progressive forms of localism, here, renders social actors as not bit-parts in a prevailing political narrative, but rather as actors progressively reconfiguring existing communities around emergent agendas.

Others have also pointed towards the kinds of experimentations and reworkings that occur within the trappings of ideological projects. For example, Ferguson (2011) argues for a narration of political life that goes beyond simply denouncing neoliberalism and its political subjectification of both the third-sector and the charitable self. Using the example of the South African Basic Income Grant, he explores the ways that government initiatives designed to give individuals the capacity to be involved in markets are undeniably neoliberal, but also simultaneously give forms of collective agency to the suppressed and ignored.

Larner and Butler (2007) also give attention to the experimental efforts of emergent 'strategic brokers' who, engendered through the roll-out of neoliberally driven policy, foster relationships between the state and civil society organisations. They argue that, despite seemingly meeting top-down requirements of decentralising state activity, the discursive performances of agency gave rise to collectivities and subjectivities that challenged discourses for the need of state retreat from social life.

Similarly, Mahony et al. (2010) draw attention to the ways in which emergent third-sector partnerships can be re-evaluated in terms of their creative potential for developing collective reappropriations of neoliberal excesses. The argument here is that the implementation of new policy gives rise to democratic, new publics that emerge as a type of response to top-down agenda making. In this instance, whilst these publics may come into being by virtue of 'being addressed'¹⁴ (Warner, 2002), they do not necessarily solely serve the decision devices and the principles that they are intended to enact (Saward, 2006). Instead, they might reflect and enact renewed forms of solidarity, democracy and the embracing of difference – actualising local politics for people that better addresses their situation.

Of relevance to this thesis, these accounts tend to articulate a challenge to move away from the reflexive sense that the decentralisation of the state must be 'neoliberal' and thus 'bad'. Instead the interest here might, and should, lie in the potential progressive mobility of a set of state/governmental devices. Subsequently, emergent political initiatives that might appear at first glance to be worryingly neoliberal may, on closer inspection, amount to something more hopeful and progressive than a simplistic regression of the social. Ultimately, this work seeks to contribute to an acknowledgement that top-down accounts of governmentality cannot account for the discursive causal processes that dictate life on the small scale. As Tilly (1999) argues, such accounts do not pay attention to forms of improvisation and polyvalent performance that generate *something more* than simply following rules or conforming to normative expectations.

¹⁴ I.e. such as the new forms of 'officially recognised' neighbourhood groups that were enabled through Big Society policy funding.

Confronting Neoliberal Logics

In other instances, geographical work has focused on the political possibilities that emerge from TSOs that choose to distance themselves from regulatory or financial relationships with the state in order to establish oppositional, confrontational or alternative stances towards ideological logics. The focus here is not on spaces of resistance and protest (those who seek to contribute to social movements, or seek to generate a more antagonistic form of social/political change¹⁵) but instead organisations that work within their own boundaries and from there reach out to forge and partake in progressive alliances. Often these organisations are the focus of accounts that explore the formation and maintenance of alternative political and economic spaces (for example, see Fuller, Jonas & Lee, 2012). It includes organisations working parallel to the state (offering distinctive, alternative versions of services state agencies provide) or in contestation with (providing engagements the run counter-to state ideologies/priorities). More prominent examples include anti-poverty and drug rehabilitation charities (Williams et al., 2014), organisations running 'autonomous' social centres (Chatterton & Pickerill, 2010), food and sustainability concerned groups (Wilson, 2013), and the formation of organisations rolling out alternative forms of care and welfare to those marginalised within existing social systems (Brown, 2007; North & Huber, 2004).

Classically, these organisations have been defined by their gestures of refusal (Ferguson, 2010), with organisations being defined by their 'anti-ness': anti-globalisation (Escobar, 2004), anti-neo-liberalism (Della Porta & Mosca, 2005) and anti-privatisation (Runciman, 2012), as examples. Staeheli (2010) highlights examples where these gestures of refusal emerge from moments of agonism – moments in time where new people and voices enter the public sphere in an attempt to reject the dominant order. Accounts of the manifestation of discontent and disquiet in the third-sector are also echoed in less recent literature which posits the third-sector as a space for civil society, where TSOs were argued to emerge as forces of reaction to particular governmental policies – generally

¹⁵ See Nicholls (2009) for an overview of the geographies of collective action that rely less on the rigid organisational structure that in part defines a TSO.

through the attempts to entrench an alternative method of welfare/care in the face of shifting political architectures/ideologies (Najam, 1996).

Despite these gestures of refusal, it is important to note that such activity often relies on more complex and shifting positionalities that simply outside the tenets of governance. Recent bodies of work have drawn attention towards the ways in which these organisations try to carve open spaces for the enactment of more hopeful futures. For example, through the lens of homelessness, Cloke, May, & Johnsen (2010) argue that TSOs often work to forge ‘progressive alliances’, where organisations enact a “...complex marriage of provision and protest” (p. 2810). Here, they draw attention towards TSOs that pursue philosophies of care that contravene the state’s embedding of neoliberal subject-citizenship and, in doing so, prise open interstitial spaces for the possibility of ‘something other’ than state rhetorics of care – whilst simultaneously partaking in the expectations of a neoliberal contract culture. In regards to food-banking and responses to urban poverty, Lawson and Elwood (2013) contend that organisations that maintain a distance from state trappings open out possibilities for new identifications and performances that diverge away from, and disrupt, dominant political ideologies. In these instances, these organisations are said to be contributing to the enactment of autonomous forms of politics, largely through the marrying of provision, protest and alterity, that implants the notion of alternatives to wider audiences (Chatterton & Pickerill, 2010).

2.5 Putting ‘Progressive’ Interpretations to Work

In the previous section, I sought to explore the critical lens’ that have unpicked the ethical and political possibilities that have emerged through the third-sector – most notably in response to accounts of top-down neoliberal ideologies and subjectification. These accounts deliberately repudiate notions of ‘political hegemony’, and instead work to raise an awareness that the performative power of this blanket category conceals the cracks and fissures in which various agents might prefigure alternative political and ethical worlds. In doing so, I identified different strands of interpretative perspective that have focused on the capacity of organisations to work towards these alternatives, My intention is to now consider some of the questions that these accounts raise, and entwine this with

some brief reflections on why these questions might warrant consideration given the landscape in Christchurch.

Sitting behind the afore-described accounts of resistance and reappropriations within the third-sector, is a contestation of the assumption that dominant political ideologies simply produce particular forms of subject. Indeed, as Barnett et al. (2008) note, overriding accounts of governmentality and biopolitics generally provide methodological devices through which the "...publicly observable rationalities, procedures and techniques of state and non-state actors can be read as proxies for processes of subject-formation" (p. 624). In drawing to something more, however, the accounts of progressive localism, for example, not only indicate a capacity/agency for experimentation and alterity but also challenge accounts of ideological interpellation. In short, these accounts paint the capacity for organisations to foster engagements for citizens that runs counter-to the rationalities of programmes of rule that endeavour to bring about certain subject-effects.

Whilst placing organisations on a spectrum between 'insiderness' and 'outsiderness' aids in drawing attention to the formation of various spaces of ethical and political possibility, such stringent positionalities runs the risk of structuring thought in such a way that progressive political action can only ever be theorised in terms of re-active behaviour to these programmes of rule. Indeed, much of the work focusing on 'insider' organisation draws attention to the almost underhand practices of organisations reappropriating the rationalities and technologies of the state. Whilst, on the other hand, 'outsider' organisations are painted as building spaces of alterity given the short-comings of, or disconnect from, the state. In both of these instances, behaviour is framed as being in response to programmes of rule.

The subsequent effect is that the overwhelmingly strategic explanation of action and interaction in the analytics of third-sector activity cannot account for anything other than a processual 'production of rule' followed by a 'response to said-production'. In doing so, despite drawing attention to the messiness and fragility of neoliberal programmes of rule, identifying the possibilities within or outside of rule still work to augment top-down perspectives on governmentality, where despite given agency, the third-sector is said to only have the agency to *respond*.

With this in mind, one could question whether TSOs are always simply required to make the best of the situation they are given, using the tools at hand.

In this vein, less work has sought to explore the ways in which these practices, reappropriations and resistances contribute to the reworking and negotiation of state-third-sector relationships. What has in part motivated this thesis is the lack of detailed empirical insight into the specific practices and performativities of TSOs, including how they challenge and imagine alternatives to the supposed neoliberal project in the everyday. Building on an acknowledgement by Chatterton & Pickerill (2010), whose work focuses more specifically on activist organisations that work to build spaces of political autonomy, less effort has sought to provide detailed insights and empirical accounts from within organisations as to what it means to be simultaneously working towards alternative political and ethical ends, while at the same time dealing with being very much in it. Despite the aforementioned work that identifies interstitial projects of resistance within and outside of political projects, less attention has been given to the processes and practices that enable organisations to identify possibilities and subsequently carve open space to engrain them. Articulated by Gibson-Graham, there is a challenge to understand the methods through which alternative imaginations and possibilities are “...sustained by the continual work of making and remaking a space for it to exist in the face of what threatens to undermine and destroy it” (2006, xxvii).

Crucially, it is difficult to find in-depth empirical accounts of the messy, gritty and everyday interactions as TSOs envision, negotiate, build and enact relationships with state agencies and subsequently work to build frameworks for more progressive engagements and possibilities. As Williams et al. (2014) argue, new grammars and modes of attentiveness are needed in order to narrate the complex and dynamic interconnections that make-up state-third-sector relationships, in order to draw attention both to the prompting and curbing of new energies and lines of flight evidenced within third-sector behaviour. In drawing attention to a ‘messy middle ground’, Cloke and May (2014) highlight the complex, tense and contradictory spaces through which third-sector welfare organisations and the state hash-out and form service relationships and performances of care. In these spaces, complex ethical and political motivations are negotiated in order to construct relationships that, for example, both address politicalised rhetorics of

state retreat *and* work in alternative metrics into contractual relationships. Additionally, Chatterton & Pickerill (2010) focus on the everyday practices of doing through which relations to the state and political ideologies constructed particular positionings and identities – arguing that rather than a pre-fixed position or stance, connections to state agencies and projects were developed in fluid and organic ways. In some instances, individuals and organisations took anti-state approaches. However, in others, inter-connections created a mixture of influences that co-produced ideas and projects in unexpected ways.

In the above instances, attention is given the ways in which relationships between the third-sector and the state might in fact be always be being dynamically contested and negotiated. Relevantly, the context of Christchurch offers an interesting insight into the ways in which state-third-sector relationships might consist of something more than the top-down incorporation of TSOs into political agendas – reflecting fluid and fluctuating relationships between the state and third-sector that represent messy give and takes in order to shape the playing out of different social, political and ethical projects post-quake. Most visibly, CanCERN, the emergent advocacy organisation explored in Chapter Six, had been actively contributing to state recovery efforts through partnerships with recovery agencies (including the In the Know Hub – a space designed to reconnect disenfranchised citizens with recovery bodies in order to progress their house repairs). Meanwhile, the organisation was often the source of critique of state recovery practices – active both in generating public critique through the media and in developing initiatives that sought to connect and mobilise community networks in order to generate post-quake political engagements that fashioned a mirror to the seemingly regressive tactics of the state.

On the other hand, organisations such as Gap Filler and Greening the Rubble (explored in Chapter Seven) appeared to be working to undermining the status quo of cultural politics in the city, and performatively (and sometimes anarchically) contesting the conservative power of government through experimental and artistic uses of space in the ravaged city centre. Simultaneously, the organisations worked in partnership with both local and national government in order to be a part of the ‘face’ of the new city. Further explored in the empirical chapters of this thesis, this entwinement within the rebranding of the city can be seen through state promotional material about the ‘exciting and engaging

Christchurch', yet organisational activities often work to generate critique of the direction the city is moving. For example, the Retro Sports Facility, a grass area with free sports equipment, deliberately provides a mirror to the CERA Anchor project for the rebuilt city, the Metro Sports Facility – fostering deliberate questions around whether such initiatives represent a shift away from the idea that 'sport is for everyone'.

In both of the above cases, organisations appear to be crossing the line between insider and outsider organisations with some semblance of agency – offering both partnership with, and critique of, various governmental bodies at different times. It is such movements that spark questions as to what kinds of rationalities, practices and projects are being served through these movements in and outside of state connections, as well as how we might observe the messy, gritty and everyday interactions through which TSOs envision, negotiate, build and enact these relationships.

At first glance, these emergent and fluctuating relationships might be read as the beginnings of neoliberalism reasserting itself and, in so doing, closing down the potential for previously repressed discourses and influences to create new forms of fidelity to the event. However, what this thesis works to consider is how these organisations are carving open space for the possibilities of something else to embed themselves in the renewal of the city, and subsequently whether these intentions dictate as to what ways they move within, and outside of, state projects and rhetorics. Inherent in what might be called the hypothesis of this thesis, as touched upon in the introductory chapter of this thesis, is that emergent TSOs might not simply be acting in response to state projects (as suggested by the literature), but might also be acting in relation to interpretations of what the earthquakes represent in the ongoing narratives of the city. The challenge therefore partly lies in observing and unpicking what working inside and outside of formations of the neoliberal means for these organisations. Subsequently, in the following chapter, these relationships are explored in more depth in relation to the notion of a 'ruptured' landscape, where I argue that the cracks and fissures of the physical landscape generated by the earthquakes have been replicated in the symbolic order of the city.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to explore pathways through which more nuanced and hopeful articulations of third-sector activity have been empirically and conceptually mapped. The aim here has not been to provide an exhaustive and definitive account of agency within the third-sector, but rather to draw attention to the latent spaces of possibility that are being opened up by changing political architectures. In doing so, I drew attention to two logics/lines of enquiry that explore the formation of spaces of alternate political possibility and experimentation from 'within' and 'outside' of formations of the neoliberal.

Subsequently, I have used this chapter to raise a series of questions about whether TSO behaviour can be examined as something other than reactive to the top-down projects and ideologies of the state. In accounts that focus on the governance of the third-sector, I drew attention to the fact that it can only be assumed that these strategic, top-down intentions can only come-off, or indeed be resisted, in so far as they aim to bring into existence various forms of neo-liberal subject. In response, I began to interweave some reflections from the post-quake landscape in Christchurch that suggests that emergent TSOs might have been involved in more discursive movements and actions that speak of something other than co-opting to or resisting being governed. Inherent in this line of questioning is a broader question over whether space exists to re-orientate attention away from conceptual and analytical frames that focus on how third-sector-state relationships are constructed by a top-down relationship. Rather, attention is orientated towards the processes whereby organisations are more actively involved in different kinds of self-formation and representation (see also Barnett et al., 2008). Through this process, I have argued that, even within accounts that argue of the existence of a matrix of possibilities for the emergence of more 'progressive' social and political actors, that less work has rendered visible the organisational logics and strategies at play that might shape this self-formation.

In the chapter that follows, I move to explore narrations and accounts that theorise the politics of disaster landscapes. In doing so, I present more in-depth accounts of the Christchurch landscape. The intention here is to more deeply consider the ways in which the context of this landscape might be more effectively

viewed as both geologically and politically ruptured – and subsequently raises questions about how emergent TSOs might be wrapped up in embedding post-disaster creative practices in the renewal of the city.

Spaces of the Disaster

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I situated the thesis within the context of third-sector-state relations. I explored how accounts of the third-sector have enmeshed its subjects to various degrees within a political strategy that delegates risk, responsibility, and accountability from the state onto others. There, I also introduced a range of alternative modes of attentiveness that have sought to add complexity to the multifarious formations and activities of the third-sector. I built upon recent conceptualisations, focusing largely on accounts of progressive localism, to argue that more nuanced and hopeful accounts of third-sector activity might emerge through an attentiveness to the subtle, small-scale and everyday logics of TSOs in the face of dominant state rhetorics and ideologies. In doing so, I raised the potential of forms of critical scholarly production that are open to alternative geographies of social and political life.

In this chapter, I shift focus specifically to the disaster landscape by exploring how third-sector contributions to disaster response and recovery have been theoretically and empirically mapped. The purpose of the chapter is to consider and discuss how the activity of TSOs has been documented and placed in relation to the formalised recovery programmes implemented by the state after disaster events. Through this chapter, I seek to raise a series of questions about the spaces through which the organisations that consist the third-sector are said to contribute to the multifarious processes and trajectories of recovery. In placing the third-sector amongst a broader recognition of a 'rise in civil society' after disaster events (Chamlee-Wright, 2010), I question the how the third-sector has been associated with the co-construction of subjectivities in the face of adversity and uncertainty. This includes a consideration of how such activity has been critiqued as contributing to the reinstatement of a more resilient version of the established political orthodoxy.

The chapter begins by situating the thesis within geographical accounts of the politics of disasters. I outline the ways in which disaster events are said to prompt and provoke possibilities for creative trajectories and forms of political experimentation. Here, I discuss how disasters, and the notion of 'crisis' more broadly, reveals that political structures and ideologies are not inherently monolithic or stable, but are rather going through processes of constant re-invention. In doing so, I present narrative from previous events that emphasise that the suspension of normality inherent in the face of disasters is subsequently orientated towards the promotion of opportunities for further accumulation by the proponents and beneficiaries of neoliberal policies. This section then moves to discuss and explore the temporalities of third-sector activity after-disasters, paying particular attention to accounts of emergent TSOs and the difficulties faced in transitioning beyond relief-orientated activity.

In focusing on established narrative around the 'place' of TSOs in disaster landscapes, I suggest that the third-sector is normatively explored not as a space of *ongoing* social and political experimentation. Instead, it's one whose situated and creative emergences are forcefully co-opted into the top-down recovery programmes of the state. In response, in the final section, I begin to integrate early observational material from the Christchurch setting. There, the reassertion of neoliberal goals and practices undoubtedly forms a highly significant part of the post-earthquakes narrative in the city. However, in exploring the ways in which academic accounts of the recovery landscape paint the emergent third-sector as contributing to something other than a top down 'command and control' model of city recovery, I raise questions about the spaces that might be fostering something other than a tedious return to the status-quo. I subsequently use this chapter to tease out some of the ways that the earthquakes have ruptured knowledges, representations and tropes of the city. Such layering of material and observation from the city is designed to raise a series of questions about how the context of this thesis might add to existing conceptualisations of the third-sector post-disaster. It also acts as a transition into the methodological and empirical chapters that follow.

3.2 Disasters as Generative Events

Geographers have long asserted a politics of disaster (Pelling & Dill, 2010). In particular, disasters have gained relevance within geography because, as a shock to everyday rhythms and behaviours, they make visible the material, institutional and political structures that configure reality and normality (Cupples, 2012; Ozerdem & Jacoby, 2006; Pelling & Dill, 2006). For geographers willing to trace the precarious and messy fabrication of the ideologies of responses, the rendering visible of the structures that make up normality has led to work that explores disaster events and their management as part of unfolding political histories (Ozerdem & Jacoby, 2006). Within these approaches, disasters have been framed not simply as traumatic and extreme events, but as situations that render stabilised elements of our social, cultural and political lives as problematic, incomplete or insufficient (Oliver-Smith, 1999). They “unmask the nature of society’s social structure” (Oliver-Smith & Hoffman, 2002, p. 9).

More specifically, and crucially in the context of this thesis, bodies of work on disaster politics have suggested that ontological and epistemic mismatches multiply in situations where the sensibility of the world is disrupted (Yusoff, 2009). Disasters represent a situation in which reality is violently and materially disturbed. However, as well as causing extensive material damage, disasters can be understood to shake the foundations, structures and relations that previously made life legible. As Collier (2013) contends, when the building blocks of everyday life collapse and the world is rendered uncertain, social life expands and multiplies, subsequently overflowing pre-existent parameters (see also Clark, 2011). As a result, linear temporalities are blurred, new (or transformed) actors are brought to the fore of social and political life, and the contours of community life are rearranged (Tironi, 2015). Disasters, in short, can be “understood as a kind of narrative implosion where there [is] not simply meaninglessness, but also too much meaning, an excess” (Law & Singleton, 2006, p.9).

This notion of excess is touched upon in the writings of Maurice Blanchot (1995), who contends that the devastation and destruction generated by disaster events, including the sense of loss that accompanies, is simultaneously generative. Blanchot argues that that disasters (in the broadest sense) do not simply throw existing structures and ways-of-doing into disarray, but gives rise to new. Such

events start the world turning again and set something new into motion. As Clark (2011) similarly emphasises, the disaster demands change, “precisely because of its profound rupture with the past, because of the possibility of recasting it into positivity, or redeeming it, or even making sense of it” (p. 73). This doesn’t necessarily mean that the disaster generates opportunities to produce change for the better, but that such events represent cracks in the ontological edifices of the universe that disorientate and generates what Spivak terms ‘the risky night of non-knowledge’ (1994 in Clark, 2011).

Disasters, then, not only render visible the structures that organise life (see Shaw, 2012) but also work to reveal, create and provoke. Politically, Pelling and Dill (2010) argue that the disaster’s revealing of the limitations of life open up policy and political gaps, provoking increased attention on underlying inequalities and inefficiencies in governance. These openings are said to generate space for the formation of civil and community projects to provide alternative articulations and performances of political and social life. For example, Tironi (2014) contends that the excesses generated and revealed by the disaster generally leads to forms of political experimentation that seek to generate new rationalities and societal configurations as space is reassembled. Within this frame of thinking, the disaster is framed as a form of ‘totalising event’. All life in all its functional, material and affective forms grind to a halt. As the disaster unfolds, Tironi argues that an atmosphere of exploration imbues, fuelled by numerous tentative, collective and careful inquiries that seek to explore how aspects of post-disaster life might be assembled, performed or, perhaps, contested.

With reference to emergent social practices and formations, Law & Singleton (2006) contend that, alongside the trauma and hurt generated by disaster events, ‘moving and exciting’ forms of creativity emerge that work to transform and reshape post-disaster life on both individual and collective levels. They argue that these emergent creativities seek to embed performances and practices of pragmatism, care and identity in new positive senses of the self and emergent formations of community. Particularly in relation to emergent senses of the self, Cupples (2007) draws attention to the ways that Hurricane Mitch in Nicaragua gave rise to a context through which gender identities were negotiated. She argues that the ‘spatial realignments’ generated by the disaster event facilitated potentialities and possibilities that women “...might be able to exploit within a

process of identity renegotiation” (p. 170). On the other hand, and in relation to new formations of community, Solnit (2009) maintains that the suspension of normality post-disaster results not in chaos or disorder but in “emotional demonstrations of altruism and aid [and] also in a practical mustering of creativity” (p. 305). Solnit believes that disasters both generate the conditions through which re-imaginings of community are required and also reveal a latent desire for another kind of society. Pointing specifically to the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake and the aftermath Hurricane Katrina in the United States, Solnit draws specific attention to the “startling joy of disasters” that can be observed through performances of altruism and newfound purposefulness observed in the immediate aftermath of these events (p. 306).

However, despite this attention towards emergent practices and imaginations, the dominant narrative around the possibilities that arise post-disaster focuses upon how uneven caricatures of power are generally entrenched. Whilst in some cases disasters have been said to ‘shock open’ political space for the contestation of political power (Pelling & Dill, 2010), the dominant narrative holds that the creative trajectories that emerge during these times are curbed or redirected (see Kubicek, 2002). Whilst the state’s incapacity to respond adequately to an extreme event can foster a temporary power vacuum, a significant body of work has pointed towards the difficulties in establishing anything other than the status-quo that previously governed social and political life (Kubicek, 2002; Olson & Gawronski, 2003; Pelling & Dill, 2006; San Juan Victoria, 2000; Woodhouse, 2011). As Pelling and Dill (2010) contend, the social and political impacts of the disaster, as well as the possibilities that the disaster brings about, “...are at times coded or hidden, distorted...or rapidly suppressed by the powerful” (p.34).

This is not to suggest that disasters do not produce politics. The aforementioned narratives suggest that disaster landscapes are marked by distinct temporalities through which political and social possibilities are both somehow made possible and subsequently tempered. Specifically, this attention to post-disaster life has emphasised the ability of state systems to reframe established political narratives “....into a practical, governing philosophy... harness[ing] the ebb and flow of political opportunity” (Peck, 2010, p. 142). Entwined in the idea that disasters represent political opportunity, is an argument that the creative trajectories that emerge from the uncertainty of the event are subsequently reappropriated to fit

narratives that align with a return to dominant state ideological ascendancy (Guggenheim, 2014). Take, for example, the small temporary utopias that are said to emerge after disasters, through which alternative practices of community, care, social learning and adaption come into being (see Chamlee-Wright, 2010; Solnit, 2009). These creative offshoots of the disaster have been widely critiqued as generally being leveraged by the state to fit prefabricated crisis narratives – where such emergent forms of community have been situated within neoliberally-driven ideological projects, where the affected subject must permanently struggle to accommodate itself to the world through its grasping of unknowability (Chandler & Reid, 2016).

In particular, Peck (2010) demonstrated, in relation to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, that the longer-run outcomes of Katrina would not be a reversal, nor even a midcourse adjustment of the process of neoliberalisation, but in fact an acceleration of its existent programs of social regression and market governance. In this case, whilst the manifestation of a tragedy disrupted “business-as-usual neoliberalism” (p. 180), the disaster presented an event through which ideological visions manifested in rhetorics and forms of political experimentation that worked to produce, refine and stabilise the landscape (see also Klein, 2008). Specifically, Peck argued that,

There is a tragic truth in the ways in which Katrina ‘laid bare’ the operating model of American neoliberalism, its inequities and limitations. But by the same token, the relentless political management of the hurricane's protracted aftermath exposes the continuing grip of this project, manifest in what has been a forceful display of orchestrated ideological recoil (pp. 179-180).

Here, Peck points towards a concentration of political power after the hurricane, despite the initial event rendering visible concerns about the underlying distributions of rights between citizens and citizens and the state. In this instance, the orchestrated ideological recoil consisted of the shifting of accusations of (national) governmental failure to one of state and local government failure (Gotham & Greenberg, 2008). It also included the opening up of debates about fiscal responsibility and the role of government in assisting recovery that emphasised the ‘limitations’ of the welfare state (Linnerooth-Bayer & Hochrainer-

Stigler, 2015) and, simultaneously, the replacement of early narratives of victimisation with discourses of individual responsibility (Dynes & Rodríguez, 2010). Similar accounts have sought to portray further disaster contexts as spaces of subsequent political experimentation, where hegemonic political projects belay their messiness and undertake forms of ontological production – in turn generating conditions that strategically limit the possibilities for emergent life, whilst simultaneously opening the door for the entrenchment of others (Johnston, Sears, & Wilcox, 2012; Loewenstein, 2015; Pyles, 2009).

Thus, the label of ‘disaster politics’ is generally employed to describe a reactive regime of organising the social, where attendant forms of power, knowledge and subjectification are demonstrated through a purposeful, directed and top-down political framing of the spaces of the disaster (Aradau & Van Munster, 2011). Through what actors and technologies these political projects are given purchase and persuasiveness is more open to question, however (Pelling & Dill, 2010). In what follows, I shift attention to the role of the third-sector in disaster recovery. I examine the kinds of activity TSOs have been presented in carrying out in disaster landscapes, and in doing so I tease out the ways in which such organisations have been narrated as contributing to the implementation of these top-down projects.

3.3 The Third Sector in Recovery Landscapes

The previous section sought to present how geographers, in particular, have come to make sense of the creative trajectories that emerge from disaster events. In focusing on how disasters are said to make visible the institutional, cultural and political foundations that configure normality, I reflected that the normative argument is that disasters give rise to forms of political adjustment that lay claim and control the kinds of lines of flight that emanate from the space ruptured by the disaster. In this section, I focus more specifically on the roles that TSOs play in these ‘landscapes of excessiveness’ (Yusoff, 2009).

The third-sector is undoubtedly a significant actor in the post-disaster landscape – active in areas of disaster preparedness, mitigation and response. Indeed, according to Christoplos (2003), in virtually all disasters it is the embeddedness of TSOs that provide the most immediate, as well as the vast majority, of support and welfare to victims. Despite this, significant bodies of work have sought to

rationalise that such activity unintentionally contributes to the neoliberal project through its lessening of state responsibilities (Slim, 2006). As such, in this section I begin by exploring accounts of the roles that TSOs play in disaster landscapes, before moving to consider how the third-sector might be explored as a space through which a terrain of possibility of alternative action might be imagined.

It is clear that the third-sector forms a significant aspect of disaster response and recovery (Ozerdem & Jacoby, 2006; Shaw & Goda, 2004).¹⁶ TSOs have long been recognised as being more efficient providers of welfare post-disaster, and are said to have the capacity to implement more deeply embedded programmes that connect victims to a range of resources (Bolin & Stanford, 1998; Oliver-Smith, 1999). In contrast to the bureaucracy and inefficiency of state responses to disasters, TSOs have generally been heralded as identifying key welfare concerns in a more timely and organised manner – with significant bodies of work after Hurricane Katrina pointing towards the inadequacies of state recovery programmes (Weber & Peek, 2012). In this vein, as the state's position as a 'provider' is eroded partly through a revelation of its limitations, the third-sector is generally viewed as consisting of actors with specialised capacities, efficiently-allocated resources and higher levels of motivation that is well 'placed' to provide and mobilise forms of care required during the recovery phase (Shaw, 2003). More specifically, accounts of the third-sector in disaster recovery frameworks focus upon three characteristics that define their value in this setting:

Firstly, a significant body of work points towards TSOs as being equipped to deal with the complexities of post-disaster needs (Clark, 1991; Daly & Brassard, 2011; Flatt & Stys, 2013). Because TSOs tend to be human-service orientated, providing ongoing support to clients on a whole range of needs, the resources, personnel, facilities, and services of TSOs are argued to be mobilised quickly in times of crisis (Flatt & Stys, 2013). For example, TSOs are generally supported by community leadership and have positive relationships with local citizens, enabling the formation of a clearer picture of what forms of support, welfare and aid are required in order to instigate recovery (Christoplos, 2003). In addition,

¹⁶ It is important to note here that these accounts often describe various guises of the third-sector for example, the non-profit sector, non-governmental organisations and, in part, civil society. In this thesis, where these varying labels have been employed to convey different conceptual frameworks, I have attempted to distinguish this within my discussion.

Drabek and McEntire (2002) conclude from their review of the literature on multi-organisational collaboration in disasters, that the embeddedness of TSOs provides a depth of community that other agencies and state-orientated programmes cannot achieve in a short space of time. They offer not just a way into addressing the complexities of post-disaster welfare needs but the possibility of a route 'into' community for the more institutionalised programmes as recovery progresses. In short, established TSOs are said to be (more closely) in-touch with 'community' (Völz, 2005).

Secondly, and linked to the above point, TSOs are argued to be more successful in instigating and enabling community aspects of the recovery. It is argued that TSOs are often better 'placed' to respond to disaster affected populations. Empirical work from disasters in Mexico (Quarantelli, 1993), Peru (Schilderman, 1993), Japan (Comfort, 1996; Shaw & Goda, 2004), Turkey (Karanci & Aksit, 2000) and India (Ozerdem & Jacoby, 2006), all indicate the significance of TSO activity in co-ordinating local level disaster response and rehabilitation plans. Often this is in contrast to the spectacular, large-scale and economy-driven responses of the state. The capacity to attune to more micro-spatial needs is often assumed to emerge from such organisations being 'of' the people, in turn insinuating a 'ground up' approach as opposed to the rigidity of top-down recovery efforts (Luna, 2001). Entwined in such thinking is that TSOs are better placed to return community functionality, whilst the formalised and organised strategies of the state and private market are better moving within other domains, namely instigating infrastructural and economic recovery (Bolin & Stanford, 1998). Most visibly, such acknowledgements has led to significant state funding of the third-sector after disasters (Wakolbinger & Toyasaki, 2011) – recognising that there are services that the state is unable or less willing to supply (Sapat, 2016).

Thirdly, TSOs are said to be key actors in contributing to discourses and practices of post-disaster resilience and the forging of resilient communities, organisations and systems in the face of future insecurity (Aldrich, 2012). In providing an in-depth ethnographic account in the aftermath of Hurricanes Rita, Ike, and Katrina, Phillips (2014) draws out the ways in which the Mennonite Disaster Service, a faith-based organisation, sought to remain involved with affected communities over longer periods of time. In these instances, the organisation was argued to

have instilled practices of environmental and social resilience, in a way that that top-down 'in and out' state responses to disasters failed to achieve. These lengthier and more nuanced engagements (as drawn out in the aforementioned first point) are widely thought to not only address the complexities of welfare needs post-disaster, but build knowledge and awareness of how to better respond to future disasters (MacRae & Hodgkin, 2011). In their text on the Hurricane Katrina diaspora, Peek and Weber (2012) point towards the forms of 'community building' that TSOs became wrapped up in due to the embedded and (comparatively) longitudinal encounters organisations had with affected communities. Similarly, Chandra & Acosta (2009) argue that TSOs are uniquely positioned to improve the resilience of communities to withstand future events through the ways in which they strengthen relationships and social networks between affected communities, as well as with the state, given their more focused approach to community development (see Telford, Arnold & Harth, 2004). In these instances, TSOs were said to have been entwined within the development of practices of community resilience as they brought together affected communities in response to uncertainty and adversity (see Pelling, 2003).

Given the chaos of the post-disaster setting, the capacity of TSOs to mobilise community resources, address the complexity of local needs and to implement programmes that embed resilience against ongoing uncertainty, has seen the third-sector become a co-provider of welfare and relief in the immediate relief phases after disaster (Bies & Simo, 2007) – with research pointing towards the 'strengthening' of state-third-sector relationships in times of crisis and adversity (Fogarty, 2014). As Chamlee-Wright (2010) has argued, the social learning processes that unfolds within the context of the third-sector in these settings has the potential to overcome complex social coordination problems, which has value not just for the community concerned but for more centralised state recovery programmes. As Stallings and Quarantelli (1985) note, this value often leads to the emergent forms of altruism and care (see Solnit, 2009) becoming 'formalised' through the formation of community and third-sector networks. This ensures that they are eligible for recovery related funds, that local needs and concerns are still represented as recovery progresses and, most significantly, results in local responses forming a part of the top-down 'command and control' programmes of recovery. As I turn to in the following section, this placement of TSOs alongside

and within state recovery frameworks has important implications for how geographers have viewed the material, political and affective spaces that emerge from disasters.

The Trappings of State-Led Recovery

Much of the existing research around the roles of the third-sector in disaster response and recovery has tended to subsequently examine TSO behaviour in relation to the formalised state recovery programmes. In particular, significant bodies of literature have reinforced the notion that the third-sector is an important part of state recovery programmes – with organisations having the capacity, as explored above, to work within spaces that states are unwilling or unable to penetrate (Lewis, 2013). Both the revealing of the limitations of the state and the unique resources and positioning of TSOs has led to the emergence of cross-sector collaborative response and relief strategies. Often both established and emergent TSOs and community networks have become a part of formalised recovery programmes (Comfort & Kapucu, 2006; Waugh & Streib, 2006). More specifically, thrust into filling the gaps left by the retreating and limited welfare state, TSOs are generally assumed to be forcefully pulled into ‘collaborative’ activities (Bies & Simo, 2007). This section discusses both the ways in which this occurs and the rationalities and political ends to which it is argued to serve.

Contrary to the chaos and disorganisation that reigns immediately after disaster events, it is broadly accepted that mid-longer term recovery landscapes are marked by processes of the state reasserting itself in various capacities (Rozario, 2007). The orthodoxy here is that as the state reasserts itself, generally beginning from a few months to one-year post-event, and a return to the pre-existing political-economic and symbolic order is seen as emergent forms of community and organisation are brought within formalised recovery plans (Ozerdem & Jacoby, 2006; Rozario, 2007; Wisner, 2001). In regards to the third-sector, this is generally regarded as an ‘institutionalisation’ of emergent networks, where the multifarious networks, communities and organisations are either subsumed by a broader state recovery agency, or are contracted/placed in order to carry out specific aspects of the recovery (Shaw, 2003; Twigg & Mosel, 2017). For organisations that emerged as a result of the event itself – either through unmet needs (Schneider, 1992), a disillusionment with initial state efforts (Wenger,

1992) or the lack of a community voice (Drabek & McEntire, 2003) – this often results in the ceasing of operation, the formalisation of activity (i.e. emergent ‘communities’ established as registered organisations) or the signing up to contracted activity (in order to carry out state-directed recovery activity) (Ozerdem & Jacoby, 2006).

Put bluntly, such reassertions of power sees third-sector responses normatively examined as a part of state recovery frameworks. In these instances, disasters are said to deliberately actualised, often for the political purpose of replicating existing hierarchies and reasserting the authority of conservative leadership and power relations. Most notably in regards to the third-sector, it has seen the deployment of political technologies of control that underpin particular practices and align post-disaster trajectories with command and control modes of recovery. For example, Dattani (2012) points towards the requirements of a contract and competition culture that sees established and emergent TSOs shift focus to the strategic requirements of the state after the chaos of the disaster has seemingly subsided. In the case of earthquake response in Turkey, Ozerdem & Jacoby (2006) note that the state took forceful and prohibitive action, restricting the number and types of organisations involved in the recovery period through a withholding in funding. Describing more ‘soft-touch’ approaches, both Quarantelli (1993) and Benson, Twigg & Myers (2001) point towards the emergence of discourses of the use and value of third-sector and civil society activity within recovery. In both instances, they argue that political structures are often involved in shaping discourses of the need for ‘expert oversight’ as order is restored. Here, even if the third-sector is engaged with to provide a community representation to further notions of ‘participatory recovery’, a deliberate demarcation of ‘public’ and ‘expert’ is maintained in order to sustain control over decision making (Kweit & Kweit, 2004).

The implications of TSOs being pulled into state strategies – including the forging of new alliances – is that the third-sector is often examined as a part of the political narratives of disaster events. Some work has examined this ‘pulling in’ of third-sector activity positively, arguing that incorporation into state-led recovery programmes represents the opening up of political gaps of possibility for social inclusivity. Twigg (2004) argues that the decentralisation of disaster management responsibilities has increased opportunities for community voices to be

represented during recovery and reconstruction. There is a broader consensus that these closer relationships have rendered TSOs as increasingly important elements in both policy development and administrative implementation, where 'some' community voice is considered better than none at all (Jalali, 2002). In addition, others have suggested that third-sector support of state-sector efforts to enhance the resilience of communities at risk from natural hazards can both improve disaster preparedness and increase knowledge of community needs in the longer term (Luna, 2001). In this regard, Karancı and Aksit (2000) have argued that more formalised relationships between the third-sector and state are key to successful disaster response strategies given that each actor generally brings different resources to the partnership – with the state providing funding and technical skill, whilst more localised and embedded TSOs hold key social knowledges.

However, the dominant perspective is that the formalised inclusion of TSOs into recovery programmes reflects a reassertion of neoliberal goals and practices. In particular, the increasing reliance on TSOs has been understood as a part of an ongoing strategy of 'spatial liberalism' (Clarke & Cochrane, 2013), where the formal process of making others responsible for aspects of the recovery reflects a new opportunity for the decentralisation of service delivery (Peck, 2006). The assumption that decentralisation will somehow provide more effective recovery practices has been argued as masking a neglect for structural inequalities between and within communities (see Ozerdem & Jacoby, 2006). Furthermore, it also reflects a political strategy that delegates risk, responsibility, and accountability from the state onto new subjects in the disaster landscape.

Additionally, Aguirre (2002) contends that the expectations placed on TSOs under the rubric of 'recovery' often masks broader neoliberal ideologies. reflecting an inherent expectation that actual or perceived crises present opportunities for radical ideological and political gain. In this way, the creative trajectories of disaster (as previously described) are conceptualised as the opening up of space for new policy experiments that seek to engineer and embed certain forms of civic engagement. For example, rhetorics of TSOs as being placed to increase community resilience and as the 'best actor' to return community functionality are said to represent the adaptiveness of political projects to continue a process of hollowing out of state responsibility (Nakagawa & Shaw, 2004; Tierney, 2015).

Here, discourses of ‘connection to community’ and ‘understanding of local needs’ are often leveraged in order to reduce the responsibility of the state in providing relief efforts (Nickel & Eikenberry, 2007). In addition, a number of authors have pointed towards political projects that shift the task of dealing with the problematic of an uncertain life to other societal actors (Chandler & Reid, 2016; Masten & Obradović, 2008; Welsh, 2014). As such, TSOs are normatively imagined as a part of the ‘subjectification’ of post-disaster space, where any community-led/orientated creative activity is eventually incorporated into recovery strategies that normalise the idea that top-down approaches will provide a metric of success and best hope for the future.

A Politics of Possibility

Crucially for this thesis, a consequence of these relationships is the perception that latent spaces of possibility for something more progressive than a return to the status-quo are quickly closed down by adapting political architectures. The idea that political architectures adapt to oversee post-disaster space diminishes the acknowledgement of an ontology of anything other than a seemingly insipid state-inspired recovery. With this frame of thinking, it is difficult to see TSOs as anything other than bit-part players in a landscape reconfigured by processes of political and neoliberal experimentation that directly shapes how recovery plays out and, in turn, inscribes a top-down framing of social life.

More bluntly, the focus on the neoliberal restructuring of post-disaster space paints an epistemological orthodoxy where the third-sector is envisaged in carrying out specific kinds of activity that more-or-less aligns with state expectations, particularly as relief phases give way to more recovery-orientated activity. Even in instances where organisations demonstrate ‘creative’ responses to the excessiveness of the disaster landscape the normative approach is to trace these emergences back to political rationalities that endeavoured or aspired to bring about certain subject-effects or orientations (see Barnett et al., 2008; Kaufmann, 2013). This critical response offers little scope for interpretations of post-disaster landscapes as anything other than a drearily predictable return to the political and ideological status-quo. Such an approach closes down lines of enquiry that might examine the third-sector as fostering potential new spaces of ethical and political mobilisation, or as spaces that might represent significant means of enacting alternative politics. Here I argue that focusing solely on

disasters as 'governable events' does not sufficiently help us to imagine the kinds of creative experimentations and alternative imaginations that make up post-disaster life, and it risks cloaking the processes through which alternatives are imagined, sought after and contested over.

As such, a number of questions remain as to the ways in which this repositioning of political actors in the aftermath of a disaster unfolds at multiple scales and across different registers. Whilst significant attention has been given to the ways in which TSOs mobilise resources and provide forms of care in the immediate aftermath to disasters, it remains to be seen as to how, in seemingly coproducing neoliberal structures and responses, the performances of TSOs might be potentially reworking and reinterpreting the values and judgments supposedly normalised in the regulatory frameworks of government recovery strategies in multifarious ways. As Pelling and Dill (2006) note, the activity of TSOs may appear temporary, lasting only as long as the relief or reconstruction periods, but can potentially lead to long-term changes in the landscape. Reflecting both on the aftermath of the 1988 Hurricane Mitch and the 1985 Mexico earthquake, they consider that third-sector activity contributed to the formation of political spaces of alternativeness that, long after organisational involvement, ultimately contributed to affective atmospheres of change (see also San Juan Victoria, 2000). Hinted at, although not drawn out in their analysis, is that third-sector activity in the aftermath of disasters might work to build and shape spaces of alterity on a range of scales, despite eventually aligning with top-down recovery strategies.

Pelling and Dill's analysis raises two interesting points of concern in regards to third-sector activity that are pertinent to the empirical focus of this thesis. Firstly, it raises the point that TSOs might be wrapped in processes of 'something else' whilst working within seemingly top-down modes of recovery. This acknowledgement hints at the possible presence of interstitial spaces that exist within procedures of political subjectification, through which a number of ethical and political openings are carved out in order to foster alternative sensibilities that don't align with the dominant ideological sensibilities. Secondly, it raises the question as to whether TSOs might be wrapped up in engendering spaces for 'something else' both external to state recovery programmes and, possibly, beyond the life of the organisations themselves. This point raises interesting

questions around the complex temporalities that might at play in regards to the new spaces of experimentation and creativity that might emerge post-disaster. Although organisational activity might be of short temporal duration, the propositional process that underlies them might endure in different ways. This suggests that while the disaster event may not be of sufficient scale to induce broad systemic change, third-sector behaviour might give rise to practices, imaginations, affects and modes of engagement that give rise to life in other ways. There is a proposition here that the creative trajectories that emerge post-disaster in the third-sector (i.e. before they are pulled into state-led recovery efforts) might be involved in igniting the possibility that alternative forms of community and engagement can become a more lasting and sustainable facet of the re-emerging landscape.

Consequently, in what follows, I expand upon the introductory chapter of this thesis by reflecting more thoroughly on the post-disaster landscape in Christchurch. In particular, in light of the analysis and literature presented in this chapter so far, I more comprehensively explore how the earthquakes appear to have ruptured the normality and legibility of life in the city, and subsequently pay attention to rhetorics and discourses of state-led recovery. Through this section, I begin to map some of the arguments presented in the first half of this thesis onto the Christchurch landscape by exploring the ways the earthquakes seemingly opened up both sociocultural and geophysical fissures in the structures of the city. Through this, I raise a series of initial questions about the temporalities at play within these fissures that raise questions about the applicability of the arguments presented in this chapter so far.

In doing so, I begin a process of drawing attention to the excesses of disaster life in Christchurch by providing an initial insight into the kinds of activities and experimentations undertaken by the emergent third-sector in the city. The intention here is to not only introduce and tease out the ways in which the reassertion of neoliberal goals and practices forms a significant part of post-earthquake narrative in the city, but to begin to hint at how the activities of these TSOs point at the existence of 'something else'. This includes the formation of spaces and engagements that point towards the emergence of alternative and socially marginalised knowledges and perspectives capable of challenging traditional disaster discourses in various ways. The narrative that follows also

works to begin a transition into the methodological and empirical chapters that follow.

3.4 Christchurch: A Ruptured City

In reflecting upon the emergent meanings attached to the disaster in Christchurch, Pickles (2016) argues that the earthquakes not only ruptured the material appearance of the city, but also interrupted the status-quo of its character by forcing a questioning of the narratives that bound the city together. Given that disasters can be understood as multidimensional landscapes of physical destruction and social disequilibrium (Oliver-Smith, 1999) it can be suggested that the cracks and fissures of the physical landscape are also found in the institutional and symbolic order of the city, resulting in spaces of disputed signification. As a result, the earthquakes in Christchurch have generated spaces of response to the cracks and fissures in the order of the city – spaces that the aforementioned literature argue should be repressed through adapting political architectures and technologies.

However, in this section, I build on the ideas introduced in the first half of this chapter to explore evidence of some of the ways the earthquakes ruptured social and political life in Christchurch and gave rise to trajectories of something else. I draw more nuanced attention to the ways the third-sector has been wrapped up within narrations of the earthquakes, including the ways in which previously significant narratives of the city have been challenged by the rise of alternative imaginaries and engagements through the emergent third-sector. In doing so, I also reflect further on the ways philosophies of the ‘event’ might offer a set of different critical gestures in exploring the ruptured city.

The Disaster as an ‘Event’

Considering the earthquakes through a philosophy of the event, in exploring the possibility of physical and social ruptures to the status quo, opens up a series of new questions and uncertainties in the analysis of post-disaster life. While accounts of disaster governmentality, for example, have a role to play, they cannot pay adequate attention to the reshuffling of objects from inexistence to existence – the “changing [of] coordinates between what is visible and invisible” (Shaw, 2012, p. 623). For example, emphasis on ideas of resilience often serve to defend and strengthen the political economic status quo (Grove, 2012), leading

to discourses and analyses that will often simply emphasise a reinstatement of order involving the reform of those very institutions and relations that helped to create vulnerability and instability in the first place.¹⁷ Event theory, by contrast, invites us to consider the earthquakes from outside of existing social and political regimes of understanding; recognising post-disaster not as the emergence of insecurity out of a stable pre-earthquake status quo, but as a rupture that reveals the manifold excesses and voids of insecurity existing within the apparent status quo (Cloke, Dickinson & Tupper, 2017).

The city of Christchurch, as already described, has been significantly altered by a series of significant earthquakes and thousands of subsequent aftershocks. My account of the earthquakes as an event after draws on at least three ways in which previously significant narratives of the city have been challenged, or at least suspended, as a result of these shocks and have been made visible as the processes of relief and recovery have played out. The following narratives are described both in relation to the evidence of a rupture and the ways in which the emergent third-sector has been wrapped up in re-assembling the landscape. These narratives are not necessarily entirely distinct, but offer three insights into the ways in which the earthquakes have generated cracks and fissures within the orthodoxies of the city.

Neoliberalism and the Colonial City

A significant characteristic of pre-earthquake Christchurch was the noticeable neoliberalisation of the city over the previous three decades. In 1984, the then Labour government initiated a stream of economic reforms including monetarist economic policy, significant reductions in government intervention and subsidies, and privatisation of state assets.¹⁸ Despite some action from the Clark government of 1999-2008, neoliberal norms have continued relatively undiminished, as radical free-market and privatisation policies have subsequently been ramped up and welfare benefits reduced (see Johnston et al, 2011; Rashbrooke, 2013). This national context of neoliberal ideology has been argued to have directly shaped the political and economic character of the city of Christchurch. As has been documented by Hayward (2012), the shape and

¹⁷ See Hayward, 2013 and Wilson, 2013 for local examples.

¹⁸ In what became known as 'Rogernomics' after the then Finance Minister, Roger Douglas.

direction of city planning in Christchurch has been characterised by a regime promoted economic entrepreneurship. Entwined in this was a diminishment of the role of elected councils, whose activity was largely reduced to that of mitigating the negative impacts of investment rather than any more pro-active planning of the city.

Additionally, in Christchurch, the neoliberal project has been argued to co-exist with a broader cultural imagination that the city works as a kind of localised and benevolent democracy (Marcetic, 2017) that reflected its colonial upbringing. This cultural and urban imaginations of Christchurch as a conservative city was reflected in the thought that the city reflected a "...quaint and tranquil version of Englishness" (Cupples and Glynn, 2009, 1) – a characteristic formed through an ignorance of pre-colonial histories, and a deliberate supplication of dominant Anglophilia. In Christchurch, the colonial styling as a Garden City led in particular to the introduction of trees, parks and gardens that mirrored an imaginary of English nature, and saw the embedding of an aligning conservative political orthodoxy that stripped the city of radical political potential. Pickles (2016) argues that these features of the urban environment have influenced historical mythmaking and ideological storytelling about Christchurch, such that resultant place narratives portray a history of economic strength and political conservatism – narratives that are shaped as much by omission and selective framing than anything else. Consequently, the city of Christchurch before the earthquakes broadly represented a political-economic environment which reflected wider trends of privatisation, deregulation and state shrinkage, and where land-owning and business interests gave influential endorsement to the neoliberal policies that were so advantageous to them.

The earthquakes, however, appear to have given rise to alternative projects that seek to reflect the multidimensional nature of cultural life and Christchurch's more varied history. For example, Bennett (2014) has pointed towards the earthquakes as generating the opportunity for Māori cultural principles and claims to the city to be built into the re-design of the city centre. Local tribal groups, such as Ngāi Tahu, have a formal place in the city's recovery plan, and it has been argued that the exclusion of indigenous involvement in the original planning of the city can be rectified because the earthquakes represent a fresh beginning of sorts (see Ballard et al, 2015). The emergent third-sector also appear to be acknowledging

the 'breaking down' of the colonial way of doing, with projects based upon Māori historical claims to central city spaces (seen both through Gap Filler and One Voice TRK activity) and the mobilisation of Māori networks to support and inform activity, such as the establishment of Te Waka o Maui Watene Māori (Māori wardens) to provide support to Gap Filler projects.¹⁹

Furthermore, key colonial buildings in the centre of the city have become battle grounds for a clash of the old and the new. Figures 7, 9 and 9 illustrate the material crumbling of some of these colonial sites in Christchurch. While preservationists and some political figures pushed for the restoration of historically strategic structures, others, such as the Anglican Church of New Zealand in the case of the cathedral, argue that the civic need for such restoration is outweighed by a more practical and '21st century' need for replacement spaces that better fit the multi-purpose requirements of contemporary New Zealand community. Here, discourses of conservatism appeared open to challenge as the city dealt with the physical destruction of the earthquake. For example, Low (2012) wrote of the physical breaking down of the city's conservative heritage:

Walking south I came to the Worcester Boulevard Bridge. It stood at the centre of a colonial vista running east to the cathedral and west to the museum. A nostalgic tourist tram ran its length. It was peopled with statues of the founding old boys. The gentle willow-lined Avon ran beneath its ironwork railings, and a long-forgotten sandwich board advertised Genuine Edwardian Punting. This was the apex of the city's conservative heritage, its visual link with the past. It was, as they say, munted.

Evidencing the kinds of cracks that were opening up in the notion of a conservative Christchurch, Low then noted that he, reflecting on the projects prompted by the emergent third-sector (such as Gap Filler and Greening the Rubble),

...assumed the conservative old city would simply propose a conservative new city, statues, willow trees and all. But, given the chance, Christchurch has collectively proposed something radically different from its old elitist robes.

¹⁹ These projects are explored in depth in Chapter Seven.

Tied in with discourses of the breaking of a colonial grip on the city, Low's comments are also of interest because they begin to hint at the ways in which colonialism and conservatism in Christchurch had been deeply connected with a vibrant tourist economy. For Low, the breaking down of a colonial hold on the city was interesting not just because it opened up space for different architectures and cultural traits to emerge, but that the earthquakes had created space and momentum for the generation of new representations that had previously been seen as out of place in the city. In contrast, the proposition of something 'radically different' meant not just the emergence of local claims to the city, but that these claims were beginning to feed into new cultural representations of the city as a whole – in a way changing the 'face' of the city. As such, because of the earthquakes, historical narratives of Englishness, and the associated exclusion of the multifarious nature of the city, were beginning to give way to more recognisable traits of New Zealandness.



Figure 6: An iconic image of classically 'English' Christchurch. Included in shot is punting on the River Avon, alongside the famous Edmonds Band Rotunda (which backs onto Cambridge Terrace) [author unknown]



Figure 7: The demolition of the Edmonds Rotunda in 2012 (Hargreaves, 2012)



Figure 8: A crumbling Christchurch Cathedral. The pictured damage is both from the earthquakes and the beginnings of an attempt to demolish it (which was stopped by court action) [BeckerFraserPhotos, 2013]

Shifting State-Society Relations

Another line of evidence for the rupturing of the city could be seen through the ways the disaster event opened up avenues for social participation by reshaping state-society relations. In addition to the aforementioned conservative culture of the city, a significant characteristic of both local and national politics in the landscape was an ongoing difficulty in formulating or mobilising alternatives to the political conservatism embedded within the city. In particular, the ruling National party (2008-present) had developed a reputation for withstanding political controversy and the implementation of increasingly divisive policy decisions – a reputation that led to the then prime minister, John Key, gaining the nickname ‘Teflon John’ (Small, 2016).²⁰ On a more local scale, the National party’s decision to forcefully remove democratically elected councillors from the running of the local environmental council, ECAN, had raised significant concerns on both the continuing national interference in local affairs and the ways in which members of the public were withheld from political domains (Law, 2016). Despite significant protests and growing disillusionment, little evidence of change, or a desire to change the ways in which Christchurch locals could contribute to the shaping of political infrastructure and policy, could be seen in the city. The ability of the state to shift attention and frame decision-making appeared to be working in the city to shape the impression that protests and social action were disparate, discursive and of the few (see Hayman, Young, Mann, & Sachdeva, 2012).

Certainly, a continuation of this power was initially seen as a part of the state response to the earthquakes. Hayward (2016) noted how the earthquakes were immediately followed by a suspension of elected city government and imposition of a top-down ‘command and control’ model of city recovery by central government. This could be partly seen through the government acquiring and clearing land and then selling it off to private investors in a deregulated planning environment devoid of the normal safeguards of public scrutiny (see Dann, 2014). This clearing of obstacles for investors has been accompanied both by a reframing of Christchurch citizens as resilient subjects needing to make the right choices in response to the disaster, and by a more affective assembling of tones of reason that normalise the idea that market-led investment will provide a metric

²⁰ In reference to the idea that controversy didn’t ‘stick’ to him or his party.

of success and hope for the future of the city (see Cloke & Conradson, forthcoming).

However, it soon became obvious that the adeptness and adaptiveness of governance in the city did not ‘stick’ in the same ways it had previously. Not only did the earthquake appear to prompt disagreement with the handling of the recovery process from government organisations, but it also engrained the notion that the government was no longer ‘working for the people’ in Christchurch (see Nicholson, 2014). Most evidently, previously disparate and discursive oppositions to the conservative style of politics were brought together under the banner of ‘earthquake politics’ (Edwards, 2016). Figure 9 illustrates an example of some of the public displays of protest that could be seen in the city – referring simultaneously to Gerry Brownlee (the National Party politician who was the Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery) and the EQC, the state-run insurance body.



Figure 9: Protest signs in a suburban Christchurch shop (Corliss, 2013)

The coming-together of disenfranchised citizens and alternative political movements led a local writer, Fiona Farrell (2011), to argue that the earthquakes also generated a form of ‘political quake’. Drawing attention to the legislature

enacted by the government after the earthquakes, Farrell pointed towards the opening up of space for government-society relations to change, arguing that the earthquakes had provided some sort of impetus for ‘community’ to reshape the free-market ideology practiced by the New Zealand government. In a similar vein, Hayward (2012) also contended that the earthquake “...exposed the wider cracks in [the] democratic and social landscape.”

Evidencing this idea of a political quake, the mid-term post-disaster landscape saw the coming-together of state and community organisations to collectively shape recovery strategies. Most visibly, ongoing political discontent and disillusionment formed significant barriers to recovery, requiring earthquake recovery agencies to change tact on how they involved the public in decision making (Stylianou, 2016). Swaffield (2013), in particular, described a ‘reordering of relationships’ after the earthquakes where selected community groups have also become part of informing CERA and EQC direction. These engagements appeared to emerge from the acknowledgement that their position as a nationally-controlled state agencies limited public buy-in into their activities, subsequently slowing down not just community recovery but attempts to instil a classic example of what Ermacora & Bullivant (2016) term ‘top-down placemaking’ through an economic-centric focus on recovery.

Examples of this could be seen through the opening up of engagements and projects with CanCERN and One Voice TRK²¹, both emergent TSOs. As a representative from One Voice TRK stated, “third-sector networks used to be seen as operating independently from the government...now we’re involved in collaboratively developing a framework where the sector has a recognised voice in government affairs” (interview, 20/03/15). CanCERN, meanwhile, worked to connect disenfranchised members of the public with government recovery agencies – providing a ‘community’ voice in state-public relations and working to shape state recovery strategies. At the other end of the scale, groups such as Quake Outcasts²², were a part of well-publicised responses to the zoning scheme, taking the central government to the High Court over perceived unlawful activity in regards to the ‘special authoritative powers’ granted to the Head of CERA, Gerry Brownlee (Young, 2016). This move was unprecedented in the New

²¹ <http://onevoicetereokotahi.blogspot.co.uk/>

²² <http://www.savemyhomenz.org/>

Zealand legal system (Palmer, 2016). Whilst immediate questions could be raised about the ways in which such inclusions might simply represent the shifting nature of neoliberal governance (this is discussed in the chapters that follow), the earthquakes appeared to result in a shift in the ways the state engaged with the public, particularly as it appeared existing modes of engagement failed to exhort the desired and expected outcomes.

Emergent Rights to the City

Closely linked to notions of breaking free from representations of a colonial Christchurch has been the emergence of different threads of activity that represent different democratic and material claims to the city. In addition to the ways in which the diversity of Christchurch's heritage and character has been challenged through the rebuild efforts, a part of the emerging post-quake landscape in the city has consisted of the emergence of experimental and transitional creativity that seeks to re-appropriate discourses and practices of inhabiting the city. The argument here is that the earthquake event has released previously repressed claims as to who and what dictates the ways in which citizens perform the city – with the carving open of spatial possibilities for self-determination, temporal gaps of alternative political expression and experimentation and gaps of possibility for social inclusivity.

Most visibly, a shift in the perceived rights to the city could be seen through a change in the kinds of practices that were seen as in or out of place in the central business district – previously regarded as the heart of conservatism in Christchurch. On one hand, this could be viewed with the rise in public events and demonstrations of dissent that gave rise to the impression that the city was open to alternative performances, practices and claims to the city. Evidence of this rupture was amplified in central city spaces where particular activities and ways of doing were considered to be more 'in-place' than others. Martin (2014), for example, drew attention to the lack of social activism that took place in Christchurch in comparison to many other places in New Zealand – which her interviewees argued was in part down to the 'prevailing establishment' and in part due to the 'conservative types found here'. In contrast, post-quake, the city centre attracted numerous protests, political gatherings and mobilisations around ethical issues – in part on the belief that the CBD space represented a former stronghold

of conservative politics in the city. Similarly, Shiels (2013) pointed towards the previously limited range of events that could promote themselves in Christchurch – given that ‘ultra-conservative Christchurch’ only provided a market for certain kinds of events and event-spaces – arguing that the earthquake give rise to the demand for more creative spaces, events and possibilities for engagement.

On the other hand, the earthquakes appeared to give momentum to experimental uses of space and the support for alternative aesthetics in the city-centre – marking a significant deviation from the pre-quake status-quo. Wrapped up within activity of the emergent third-sector, as well as the discursive activity of individuals, these emergent urban contributions have taken many forms. Included in this are pop=up community events, large-scale murals and temporary art installations that all provide distinct contrast with, and challenges to, both the emptiness and abandonment of the devastated cityscape and the conservative stronghold that previously stood.

These emergent spaces have seen previously underground performances and practices of radical art and theatre, in particular, move to the fore in the city and subsequently represent a claim for something different as the city moves through the recovery phases. For example, Cupples’ (2015) account of the artwork that covers damaged and abandoned buildings in the city recognises a serious attempt to remake a traumatised city: “the creativity with which artists have painted the city redeems Christchurch, and leaves you with a sense of hope for the future of the city, a sense of what is possible” (p.12). As such, these urban projects reflected not the emergence of projects that sought simply to make present life ‘liveable’ but are the manifestation that the possibility exists for radically different urban futures. Seemingly wrapped up within these projects, organisations and urban representations is the more visible irruption of ‘creative youths’ into local politics who, prior to the earthquakes had a somewhat passive and ambiguous presence in the city, are now viewed as contributing to the formation of something else (see Young, 2015).

The Third Sector in Christchurch

As I sought to discuss in the previous section, alternative logics of knowing, being and doing have been released by the rupture created by the earthquakes in Christchurch and have released a capacity for alternative narrations of the city.

In these instances I touched upon the idea that the disaster did not simply make visible the institutional and political structures that configured normality, but ruptured them in a way that unleashed alternative, and often repressed, imaginations and sensibilities.

Rather than assuming that responses to the disaster will instantly reflect a dramatic entrenchment of the cultural and political status-quo, I began a process of drawing out the rise of emotionally charged improvisations that might invoke a fidelity to the earthquake event by recognising it as enabling the construction of a new normality. Importantly, the inclusion of the third-sector in these alternative logics and performances has seen the catering for a formalised emergence of something other than a dreary top-down, state-driven recovery. Hinted at in the above strands of post-quake life is the idea that the third-sector might simultaneously represent a space that caters for the need for something else, as well as subsequently embodying it.

This third-sector inclusion does not mean that activity is working entirely distinctly from the activities of the state however. One set of questions remains as to the degree to which these alternative narrations of the city might be reflected in new formations and envisagements of normality as the city recovers. Undeniably the city of Christchurch is still in a period of recovery at the time of writing, and the reassertion of pre-quake ideologies and practices undoubtedly forms a highly significant part of present life in the city (see Macfie, 2016²³). Organisations such as Gap Filler and Greening the Rubble, despite symbolising the emergence of a creative movement that both enabled forms of urban experimentation, have become entwined with local state strategies – and in doing so arguably have become imbued within a broader Creative-city political movement that seeks to attract investment and attention to ‘bottom-up’ and grassroots urban projects.²⁴ In addition, a critique has been made that emergent organisations such as WeCAN, CanCERN and One Voice TRK, who appeared to be carving open space for different forms of political engagement, are simply playing out the role

²³ Macfie provides an excellent, in-depth account of the ways in which the earthquakes ruptured political orthodoxies in the city – reflecting particularly on the ways CERA were forced to shift practices of ‘old politics’ in a ‘new city’.

²⁴ See Mould (2015) for a broader critique of the ways in which political institutions harness discourses of creativity to shape urban development.

of the dutiful civic representative in order to support the state in mopping up the more complex aspects of recovery that require community buy-in (Law, 2016).

What I wish to question however, and ultimately what forms a part of the backbone of this thesis, is whether these critiques represent a movement back towards the status-quo, or whether more complex discourses, representations and temporalities are at play. One on hand, at first glance, these organisations do appear to have become increasingly entwined within state recovery efforts in the city. In this line of thinking, the ruptured city and its associated narratives might be viewed as provisional or transitional in nature, offering the hope for something radical or alternative in the chaos and indeterminacy of the quake aftermath. In the language of the event, it might be argued that the earthquakes were significant enough to temporarily give rise to alternative claims to social and political life, but that they weren't significant enough to permanently alter the trajectories of the city.

On the other, however, the mere presence of these organisations appears to offer something more than accounts of post-disaster politics and life tends to acknowledge. Firstly, the presence of these emergent TSOS circa seven years after the event²⁵ suggests something other than the dominant account of organisations being 'pushed out' of the recovery landscape – perhaps hinting at a subsistence that might reflect a mandate larger than earthquake recovery itself. Secondly, a cursory observation at the life of these organisations and the ways in which they are wrapped up within reassembling narratives of Christchurch suggests that the relations and spaces through which emergent TSOs are contributing to the recovering city are not merely state controlled. Certainly, at first glance anyhow, these organisations appear to be offering forms of engagement that differ from the structured and expected processes of recovery put forward by state-led agencies – even when working within political spaces, bodies and discourses. This, in itself, raises a series of questions about the types of engagements that these organisations offer giving the changing landscape in Christchurch and the admittedly broader entrenchment of the state-led post-quake projects. Namely, are claims to a different kind of city stripped of political

²⁵ The focus of Chapter Six, CanCERN officially ceased operations in 2015/2016. The rationale for this is explored in depth in that chapter.

and social potential when working within the tenets of the agencies that are sought to be broken down?

What remains, then, is a series of questions about the extent to which these post-disaster emergent trajectories are inscribed in the new city. As such, as described in the introductory chapter of this thesis, I now move to make the day-to-day workings of these organisations the empirical focus of this research. This thesis seeks to build on the literatures and discussions introduced in the previous two chapters to instigate a more nuanced discussion about the ways in emergent TSOs were involved in articulating and propagating alternative claims to the city, particularly in the face of a top-down 'command and control' mode of recovery. In focusing specifically on the geographies of fidelity, I seek to not only explore how these creative trajectories were sustained by emotionally charged improvisations that invoke a fidelity to that event, but also the ways in which conceptualisations of the event/rupture influence perceptions of what remaining faithful to the event looks like.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I shifted focus to the post-disaster landscape and explored how third-sector contributions to disaster response and recovery have been theoretically and empirically mapped. Within it I have assessed geographical understandings of disaster landscapes, focusing in particular on accounts that frame disasters as working to reveal, create and provoke the (re)assemblage of social and political life in various ways. In doing so, I argued that normative interpretations of post-disaster life paint the organisations that make up the third-sector as relatively static and conservative actors – characterised as stimulating forms of community recovery and as serving needs that the state is unable or unwilling to provide, yet whose radical and creative potential is generally curbed through a reassertion of state dominance and political orthodoxy. I also highlighted the perceived failure of emergent TSOs in transitioning beyond relief-orientated activity as a result of a reassertion of authority that has resulted in an argument that TSOs offer little within longer recovery periods, aside from either the complicit provision of welfare or detached protest/critique.

More than a summary of these accounts, however, this chapter served to pose more specific questions about the kinds of fissures that emerge through the

incomprehensibility and instability generated by the disaster. In addition to examining more deeply the context for this research, the framing of Christchurch as a 'ruptured city' sought to introduce the ways in which the earthquakes gave rise to the manifold excesses and voids of insecurity in the city, and offered initial observations about the kinds of responses that were emerging through these sociocultural and material fissures. This layering aimed to reflect on the material, social and political ways in which the earthquakes generated the capacity (or at least, the possibility) for alternative worlds to be constructed. As I sought to highlight in this chapter, these possibilities appeared to emerge from more complex temporalities than the preceding literatures suggested – with the thematic grouping of the ways in which the earthquakes have generated cracks and fissures within the orthodoxies of the city hinting towards both more decisive and immediate progressive potential as well as the unfolding of longer, perhaps more complex, urban and political re-assemblages.

Specifically in regards to Christchurch, this chapter worked to pose a series of questions about the ways in which the possibilities raised by more progressive accounts of third-sector activity (explored in Chapter Two) might have value in the post-quake landscape. With this in mind, this chapter introduced the idea that the earthquake landscape has not immediately been marked by a top-down controlled return to the political and ideological status-quo. In so doing, I have questioned the belief that such organisations are simply pulled into the tenets of hegemonic governance, and have in turn suggested that the subsistence of these emergent organisations and the collaborations with state agencies and top-down recovery discourses might represent something more than a guileless return to the status-quo – particularly as organisations continue to prompt forms of engagement with members of the public that appear to speak to the building of 'something other' than a dreary return to pre-quake life.

As such, the event of the earthquakes was not just a provocation of how life might return to normality, but also about how established representations of the city might be challenged. The earthquakes in Christchurch appeared to serve as a powerful reminder that the city was, and could be, more than the conservative tropes and representations that seemingly held it together. In the following chapter, I describe the methodological approach taken in this research in order to explore the new spaces of experimentation that worked to confront these

conservative representations and narrations of the city. This includes an exploration of the embodied knowledges and experiences that has seen the research focus on specific creative trajectories of post-disaster life in Christchurch – discussion that feeds into the three empirical chapters that follow.

Researching a Disaster Landscape

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapters examined the theoretical orthodoxies that have underpinned analysis' of post-disaster behaviours and third-sector activity more broadly. In drawing attention to the potential blind-spots of post-disaster accounts of governmentality, I argued that attention towards how actors probed the sociocultural and material fissures of the earthquake might provide more nuanced, detailed and hopeful accounts of the contestations and alternative claims that arose through disaster's rupturing of the status-quo in Christchurch. The shift that this chapter makes is to examine in detail how this might be addressed methodologically.

An important factor that shapes the methodology of this thesis is my lived experience of the events about which I am writing. I grew up in Christchurch, was present during all the major earthquake events (and subsequent thousands of aftershocks) and was in the centre of town during the most destructive February quake – the most badly hit area of the city (in terms of loss of life). In addition, we lost our family home as a result of this quake. My neighbourhood, in a suburb on the eastern side of the city, soon became a spatial symbol of local contentious politics after the initial failures of emergency response to the earthquakes and the later introduction of the state zoning scheme. I, therefore, approached this research not as a distant or disengaged researcher but as an inhabitant and subject of the landscape.

As such, drawing on my experiences both as an earthquake-affected citizen and as a researcher working within a post-disaster landscape, this chapter develops an in-depth discussion of both the methodological approach taken to conduct this project and my position within it. Acknowledging that any form of empirical research undoubtedly demands both reflexivity of the researcher and a dialogue with research matter that influences the narrative itself (Cloke et al., 2000), I

explore how the project was born from the juncture of wider discourses in the Christchurch environment, my own previous research with forced relocatees after the earthquakes and my own positionality as an earthquake affected citizen. In doing so, I reflect on the ways in which the project emerges from, and is inherently shaped by, my fidelity to the earthquake event. The last section in particular reflects upon how fidelity shaped research direction in a way that contrasted with research emerging from others in the Exeter-USF research team.

Situating the research within the geographies of the post-disaster landscape and the organisational setting, the chapter begins by addressing the growth of geographical interest in the everyday performativities, practices and strategies that shape organisational life, and the ways that such contexts have been approached through existing research. The chapter then moves to introduce the research design and the methods employed during 9 months fieldwork in Christchurch, New Zealand. Following this, I reflect on aspects of the research process by focusing on the difficulties of conducting empirical organisational work in a research saturated landscape, as well as the ways in which complex and shifting positionalities shaped the embodied experiences of doing research.

4.2 Exploring Organisational Life

As detailed already, geographical interest in the role of the third-sector has increased steadily over the last two decades. Within these accounts of third-sector life, increasing attention has been given to the ways in which organisational life might be explored and examined. Rather than exploring organisational space as a passive container for social action, these accounts have sought to render visible the ways in which the micro practices of organisational life connect to macro processes of governance (Williams, Goodwin, & Cloke, 2014). This attention has placed an emphasis on developing methodologies that enable detailed understandings of the organisational setting, the spaces through which they operate and form influence, as well as their associated rhythms, actors, practices and contradictions (Beyes & Steyaert, 2011; Hernes, 2004; Tyler & Cohen, 2010).

In particular, geographers have been at the forefront of calling for forms of methodological enquiry that attune to the micro-spaces of organisational life, including methods that attend to how such spaces consist of, and contribute to,

affective intensities and fleeting rationalities (Ross, 2008). Conradson (2003) draws attention to the ways in which nonrepresentational formulations of practice "...enable us to attend more fully to the inter-subjective and affective dimensions [of organisations], including the 'hauntings' and 'flashes' that arguably occupy a significant place in everyday organisational life" (p.1976). The argument here is that a more general attentiveness to everyday activities, habits and improvisations might open up avenues to somehow observe in the "immaterial and sometimes ineffable dimensions of organisational life" (p. 1989).

Driving Conradson's (2003) proposition for a more attentive 'doing' of organisational space is a claim that 'drop in' forms of qualitative enquiry (such as one-off interviews) might fail to apprehend and narrate the evolving and multifaceted spaces of agency within organisations themselves. Similarly, Del Casino Jr et al. (2000) contend that organisations are socially complex objects of analysis that are often far messier than the theories that try to understand and order them. Examining organisational behaviour as the outcome of a process or theory runs the risk of obscuring practices of embodied habit and, at times, improvisation that might be influenced, but is not necessarily traceable to, any singular process or technology – despite a researcher's often adherence to specific ontological and epistemological strictures (Whatmore, 1999). In this way, TSOs in particular are often required to assemble a new direction out of the swarm of possibilities that are for a moment present – practices that often emerge from an improvised use of the social and material information that are to hand (Harrison, 2000). The methodological implications of this is that, rather than view organisations (TSOs or otherwise) as the outcome of a series of processes (say, neoliberalism), researchers might also "...work the creative tensions among the theoretically permeable fault lines between existing meta-theories", transgressing theoretical and methodological boundaries in order to construct more nuanced and complicated illustrations of organisational and social life (Del Casino Jr et al., 2000, p. 535).

The notion of 'crossing-boundaries' is not to suggest that examining TSO performativities and rationalities might simply be a case of guiding focus towards the agency/capacity of organisations to work against the grain. Rather it requires a more nuanced attentiveness to the discursive, ever-changing and fleeting forms of relational materialism that are arguably what makes up 'organisational life', or

as what Beyes & Steyaert (2011) term a 'slow motion' approach. They describe a performative method of research that, through an embeddedness within organisational life, opens up routes for not just observation of organisational experimentations, but also requires the researcher to demonstrate forms of practical inventiveness to capture the ways in which organisational life is constructed on multiple registers through ethnographic and inevitable participant observation methods. The resulting challenge here is to develop a methodological focus that orientates a gaze towards a sense of both the multiplicity of spatial scales that take place in organising an organisation, and the narratives and imaginaries that this produces (see Taylor & Spicer, 2007). Resultantly, organisational life is not viewed as a flat social surface, but one through which the emergence and manifestation of organisational narratives is explored through the 'embodied and sensuous practices' of day-to-day activity (Conradson, 2003). In other words, the idea of a 'slow motion' approach is to open up routes of experiential observation that add complexity to a simplistic story-line of an organisation and its practices.

The call for immersed participation in organisations (see also Dewsbury, Harrison, Rose, & Wylie, 2002; Dewsbury & Cloke, 2009), including an attentiveness to the ways in which narratives, life-worlds and practices are co-produced, is of crucial importance to this thesis. As later explored, I engaged with in-depth case studies of organisations in order to prompt forms of experiential participation that brings about new lines of research with participants where the researcher and participants share experiences, as well as the process of making sense of them. In particular, in-depth studies enabled the opportunity to conduct a style of dialogical interviewing that is a reciprocal and reflexive process but, more importantly, engendered a kind of "...a collaborative effort... [that creates a] contextually bound and mutually created story" (Fontana & Frey, 2004, p. 696). These kind of engagements offered, over time, a better sense of the landscape that organisations were operating in and the performances that led to different logics and practices – both dismantling the conventional distinction between researchers as agents of signification, and the research subjects as objects of signification (Butz & Besio, 2009), and opening up discussions and observations that moved simply beyond the voice of the researcher.

4.3 'Doing' Post-Disaster Research

In addition to the aforementioned explorations of organisational space, this project calls for an understanding of the multifarious ways in which disasters manifest. The post-disaster environment is perhaps one of the more methodologically and ethically complex contexts to conduct research in (Parkes, 2011). Disasters can have profound effects on those who experience them. Such environments are usually dominated by public feelings of fear, uncertainty and anxiety. Much of this uncertainty is often carried into the mid-longer term recovery periods and its effects (particularly psychological difficulties) may not materialise until a later date (Norris, Tracy, & Galea, 2009; Tierney, 2007). Importantly, the effects of the disaster are expressed in multiple, varied and complex ways, and subsequently methodologies should consider how the disaster event ruptures both the material and emotional landscapes.

Significant geographical attention has been given to how disasters and their aftermaths have disrupted peoples' sense of place, particularly as place meanings have become lost or contested through the disaster and responses to it (Scannell, Cox, & Fletcher, 2017). Given that emotions are experienced and made sense of in particular places (Rodaway, 1994), the significance of emotional interconnection and/or displacement cannot be overemphasised. Discourses of recovery tend to individualise and privatise the psychological and emotional distress associated with disaster events, subsequently contributing to an ignorance of the depth, duration and complexity of the effects of the disaster (Cox & Perry, 2011). The impact and significance of disaster events have often been measured in terms of their materiality – a line of thought that closes down questions about the various and complex emotional geographies at play after a major event. On the other hand, geographers have begun to explore how the disaster plays out emotionally through (dis)connections to the home (Morrice, 2013), the city (Hutcheson, 2013) and forms of community more broadly (Cox & Perry, 2011).

Such emotional responses are complexly intertwined with both the physical environment and the affective disaster landscape. In such circumstances, affect becomes a material that can be shaped through more material and directive manifestations of the disaster and associated recovery (Anderson & Adey, 2012).

The collective nature of affects produce specific atmospheres that are part of sites, flows and networks that make up both how the disaster is experienced and made sense of. For example, in Christchurch, the damage and demolition of over 1100 buildings in the city centre heralded significant changes to existing patterns of urban mobility and interaction. For some, the besmirched city centre has become an emotionally difficult reminder of the destruction of the earthquakes. This includes associated feelings of loss and destruction, and subsequently the CBD represents a physical manifestation of the wider emotional blanket of anxiety and despair that has sat over the city.

The implication here manifests in the need for a methodology that attunes the researcher to the complex and unexpected ways in which the disaster plays out in individual and city narratives (Chamlee-Wright, 2010). Certainly, the processual-ness of disaster recovery amplifies certain sets of conditions and creates certain spaces which are not always part of the make-up of the 'normal' everyday-city. The challenge in putting a methodology into practice is to find a way of digging below the surface of all the macro hustle and bustle activities associated with recovery and to consider the discrete geographies that make up disaster life. Clark (2005) echoes this in an argument for embracing the ways in which the disaster wrenches both the researcher and the researched off-course – tearing usual activities and ways-of-doing apart, and prompting other collectivities and performances as citizens 'stay true' to the disaster event.

Similarly, Williams (2008) states that these 'tearing-aways' from normality are crucial in understanding the socio-cultural geographies that emerge post-disaster, in turn offering more nuanced pathways to understanding how the disaster plays out on a range of registers. Such acknowledgements call for methodologies that do more than see the researcher 'breeze-in-and-out' of the landscape, but rather enables them to "...feel the disaster as a disaster of thought, something which fractures and fissures the ground we stand on, work on and think from" – meaning that sense and comprehensibility are not things that can easily, or quickly, be found (Clark, 2005, p. 386). In short, the disaster setting appears to prompt a need for 'being there' over time, so that the researcher can embrace and explore the intricate and varied trajectories of disaster life and remain open to multifarious ways in which the disaster constitutes (and is constituted by) the landscape.

Questions of how we best explore the complexities of disaster life also carries a call to consider what constitutes ethical research. Rosenstein (2004) argues that disaster research must find equivalence between the balance of risks and potential benefits of research, as well as the appropriate distribution of research burdens and benefits. Kilpatrick (2004) stresses the need to ensure that disaster research poses questions that are pertinent to the affected individuals and communities – a process that might often see the researcher undertaking work they feel less comfortable in doing. In both of these instances, calls for beneficence take centre stage, asking the researcher to employ methods so as to maximise the probability and magnitude of benefits to individual research subjects, as well as to society more broadly (Hoffman, 2009). Others have also raised provocative questions about the ways in which time and ethics entwine, with concern raised about how – in an attempt to make sense of the seemingly nonsensical – hurriedly assembled research projects seek to make sense of the complex geographies at play after disaster events (O'Mathúna, Gordijn, & Clarke, 2014).

In addition, disaster settings are often extensively over-researched (Sukarieh & Tannock, 2013) – raising questions around how best to navigate the researcher/participant relationship (see Clark & Sinclair, 2008). Importantly, concerns about over-research should not just be approached as presenting an obstacle that researchers can overcome by eschewing one method over another. Rather, the question is imbued as to what relationship exists between the researcher and the researched. Geographical endeavour has focused on the ways in which by producing knowledge we also become *responsible* to the research site. Indeed, significant bodies of work have drawn attention to the responsibility of the researcher to make sense of the disaster by understanding the local impacts and the extra-local effects (Brun & Lund, 2008; Chung et al., 2008; Clark, Greenhough, & Jazeel, 2006). Research, here, is presented as a form of *ethics of care* where the conducting of research is used as a form of extending care to the distant other (Brun, 2009). Researchers are said to be equipped with the capacity to mobilise participation as a strategy for research and action (Pain, 2004) – providing impetus for a means of voice and representation that might not be possible otherwise, and subsequently avoiding the researcher 'snatch and grab' that contributes to participant disillusionment and fatigue.

4.4 Research Design

In light of the research aims discussed in the previous chapters, and the methodological concerns outlined above, this research was initially designed to develop an in-depth account of post-disaster life by understanding the ways in which different claims were being made in the name of the earthquake. I also drew on lessons from existing research within the geographical literature that have addressed spaces and complexities of disaster contexts in order to construct a research strategy that explored the practices, affects, rhythms and routines of post-disaster life. In this section I begin by explaining the origins of the project, in order to give context to the strategies that shaped this thesis.

The impetus for this project emerged during previous research, conducted at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch. During this research, which focused on the politics of the ‘decision’ faced by red-zone households²⁶, I had been struck by comments made by participants about the kinds of support services they had turned to during the relocation process (Dickinson, 2013). For many of these households, there appeared to be a distinction between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ in terms of TSOs. For example, one respondent had told me, “The Salvation Army...they’re here with food parcels but we don’t need that...I heard there’s new community groups offering law advice though...that’s the kind of help I need.”²⁷ Entwined in this comment, and many like it, was a line of thought that traditional avenues of support were incompatible with the situation in Christchurch. For many, the immediate need of water passed quickly and was replaced with complex issues surrounding insurance pay-outs and the role of the state in recovery.

As the course of the research continued, it was clear that something more distinctive was occurring than TSOs simply filling a temporary welfare void. Organisations such as Gap Filler and Greening the Rubble (Chapter Seven) were being heralded as fostering agency in a city where public voice had been repressed (Newman-Storen & Reynolds, 2013). Even during my early

²⁶ Red-zone households were forced to relocate as a result of a compulsory government buyback scheme of ‘at-risk’ properties. This is explored in more depth in Chapter Five.

²⁷ This participant was referring to an early CanCERN advertisement that promoted links with the Residential Advisory Service (<https://advisory.org.nz/>) – a government funded initiative that offered free and impartial legal advice to earthquake affected citizens dealing with insurance/EQC documents. This was a quote from an interview with a Southshore resident in 2012.

discussions with organisations as a user, I noticed unusual terminologies that might not generally be associated with third-sector activity. For example, in listening to a talk given at the opening of a Gap Filler project, staff described the project as ‘an intervention’ and that they wanted to prompt different kinds of ‘experiential participation’. Almost in the same breath, staff thanked governmental staff and initiatives for allowing the project to go ahead – for me, this just didn’t feel like business as usual.

Simultaneously, in going back to the material gathered during my previous research I noticed narrative that I had initially put to one side, with participants often split on the kinds of support these new organisations offered. Indeed, as a red-zoner myself, I remember speaking to a neighbour, suggesting that she might find the WeCAN (an emergent advocacy group) website helpful. Her response was along the lines of “I don’t want to join a protest, I just want some information”. Accompanying these comments, and many others within the red-zone study, were vague references to the divergent trajectories of post-disaster life and the contested routes to recovery. Such ‘interpretations’ appeared to be linked both to personal experiences of the earthquakes and visions for how recovery might be performed.

Subsequently, in addition to the aforementioned methodological concerns, the research design for this thesis is informed by a series of situated and positioned knowledges that emerged from both my experiences as an earthquake affected citizen and as a researcher moving within the landscape. These knowledges inherently shaped not just the formulation of the project and the knowledges developed, but guided the employment of specific methods and strategies. Emerging from these experiences, the research questions for this project were seen to be best approached through two distinct phases:

The first was an initial ‘mapping’ phase of the third-sector landscape in Christchurch. This largely comprised of a desk-based survey of official and unofficial service databases, which were followed up with interviews of active TSOs. The intention of this phase was to ascertain a broad understanding of the types of organisations involved in the recovery environment, their visions for recovery and reconstruction, and to more deeply explore the relationships

between existing and emergent organisations – a significant research aim at this early stage.

The second phase consisted of a series of three case studies designed to provide more intensive immersions in, and observations of, the types of claims and contestations that emerged from the earthquakes. These case studies each sought to examine a different trajectory of post-quake life and engaged different methods. A red-zone study sought to explore the ways in which individuals might be performing fidelity to the event through interviews, as well as providing context to the lived experience of the disaster that contributed to the emergence of new kinds of TSO. The second and third case studies – ‘CanCERN’ and the ‘city-making organisations’ respectively – were designed to provide more ethnographic immersion in the day-to-day activities of emergent organisations. As described in the following, these two case studies were comprised of ‘working for’ organisations, although the circumstances differed significantly.

Extensive Mapping and Interviewing of TSOs

The first phase took place between November 2014 and April 2015. The initial desk-based survey aimed to ascertain the number of TSOs active in Christchurch, as well as determining the kinds of activity they might be involved in. I first examined relevant online directories that list service providers that are (or were) involved in the research setting. These included IndexNZ²⁸, NGOUpdater²⁹, and CINCH (Community Information Christchurch).³⁰

Complimenting these online databases was an in-depth inventory of ‘community-led’ and non-government initiatives that had been involved in the Christchurch recovery, by two local academics (Carlton & Vallance, 2013). This inventory was the first extensive account of the TSO landscape post-quake, and sought to highlight emergent initiatives and included groups, networks, programmes and projects established pre-quake that subsequently added disaster response or recovery elements. In total, information of over 450 organisations/initiatives were included, of which 230 were labelled as being established as a result of the earthquakes. This provided not only a valuable resource in drawing attention to

²⁸ <http://www.indexnz.com/Top/Society-and-Culture/Non-Governmental-Organisations>

²⁹ <http://ngoupdater.org.nz/>

³⁰ <http://www.cinch.org.nz/>

the rise in third-sector activity in Christchurch post-quake, but also an indicator towards how established organisations had been layering earthquake related activity on their day-to-day activities. Also of value here was an indication towards the temporality of TSO and community initiatives during recovery. Of the 450 groups listed in the inventory, 80 (18%) were classified as inactive as of September 2013 and a further 24 were listed as unknown (suggesting closure).

The intention here was not to simply provide another map of the TSO landscape. As Donoghue et al. (2006) contend, these mapping processes are an important part of contextualising and interpreting the broader institutional, systemic and societal processes that are at play in the research environment. In addition, examination of the broader TSO landscape provided a useful way to explore and give context to narrative that had informed the basis of the project (i.e. namely my previous research). Previously, I had found it confusing to get a sense of what organisations were doing what, particularly as respondents often could not clearly remember who they had engaged with. Many respondents were experiencing a form of ‘disaster fatigue’ during interviews, where recollections of particular events/earthquakes blurred together.³¹ In some instances, respondents further conflated what kinds of activity organisations they were involved in. On occasion, ‘Salvation Army’ became a default term used to describe any Christian based outreach, whilst ‘Gap Filler’ was the default for any of the new organisations that were prompting creative engagements with the city (some of which are described in the below table). The mapping process, therefore, also served to clarify the activities and mandates of particular organisations.

In total, 14 organisations were selected to interview as a part of the extensive review of the third-sector in Christchurch post-quake (see Appendix Two and Four). They were selected mainly for their public presence – all were published in local media for their recovery contributions – and were all involved in different aspects of the recovery process, or appeared to be utilising the earthquakes to carry out activity in different or unusual ways. In some cases, they were also organisations that had been spoken about at length during my previous research. In hindsight, if I knew my conceptual focus would be specifically on emergent forms of behaviour I would have concentrated solely on newly established

³¹ In some instances, people were unable to describe receiving news of the zoning decision, an example of what people came to refer to as ‘earthquake mind’.

organisations. However, at this time, I was more focused on comparisons between the 'old' and 'new'. In addition, a small number of interviews were conducted with local 'stakeholders' during this research phase. These were normally unplanned and arose through contact by one of the interviewees (later explored) or as part of wider research for the Exeter-USF project.

These organisations were contacted through a range of methods. Many were emailed, however this method soon proved only useful in revealing the extent of research saturation in Christchurch. Life in Vacant Spaces and New Life, for example, did not respond to this initial contact. However, these organisations became engaged via other gatekeepers: I was introduced to a staff member for Life in Vacant Spaces whilst interviewing a Gap Filler representative, and was invited for an interview later that day, whilst a red-zone participant was a close friend of the person behind the New Life initiative. On both occasions, staff said they were more than willing to help out but found it difficult to respond to the large amount of phone calls and emails they received about being involved in research work. Most contact was made 'informally'. In one instance I was introduced to an organisation through a fellow researcher, and in another I coincidentally started talking to a staff member at a public event and an interview was organised.

In each of these fourteen organisations, taped interviews were conducted with a senior staff member. All of these interviews were semi-structured, with participants given an overview of the project aims but explicitly told that they were free to talk about anything they felt was relevant. Two organisations were given a pseudonym, however most were willing to have their involvement publically named as being a part of the project. There was a sense here that the TSOs in this research were vying for some form of publicity around their work. As the Ministry of Awesome interviewee stated jokingly, "...you can use this any way you want to, we want the world to know what's happening down in Christchurch town" (interview, 27/03/15).

Intensive Case Studies

The intensive case studies took place between February and November 2015. I chose to conduct in-depth case-studies of three facets of post-disaster life, reflecting the multiple and varied processes that both emanated from and constituted the earthquake event in Christchurch. Firstly, the red-zone study

aimed to build on my previous work by exploring individual and households' relations to the event, and to more thoroughly explore the conditions and lived experiences through which TSOs were emerging. The two organisational studies, case studies two and three, reflected TSOs that appeared to be prompting unusual and innovative engagements in the post-quake city – albeit in significantly different ways.

This research integrated a range of methods in order to attend to the practices, affects, rhythms and routines of post-disaster life. In particular, case studies two and three employed a method of 'working for' emergent TSOs – subsequently opening up the possibility for participatory observation, interview and ethnographic practice. The rationale for this is explored in what follows.

Consistent across these case studies was the keeping of a personal research diary which was used to record fieldwork encounters, reflect upon responses, and shape research direction as the project progressed (Crang & Cook, 2007). This diary proved a precious resource to reflect upon the embodied experience of doing research, and subsequently not only informs the empirical chapters of this thesis but also enabled reflection on the complexities of doing research (later discussed).

Case Study One: Red-Zone Households

The red-zone case study was conducted over a 3-month period, between February and April 2015. The case study consisted mainly of in-depth semi-structured interviews with households who had been forced to relocate as a result of a government zoning scheme (see Dickinson, 2013). The interviews were vital for gaining a deeper understanding of the senses of subjectivity that opened out through the earthquakes, as well as exploring the new practices of identity-formation that were occurring post-quake. Interviews have been used by researchers in post-disaster scenarios to explore the complexities, practices and performances that arise as subjects seek to adapt to physically and emotionally altered landscapes (Fothergill & Peek, 2012). More specifically in relation to examining new practices of identity-formation, Crang (2002) argues that semi-structured interviews are at the forefront of qualitative research because they enable the exploration of tacit, local and embedded knowledges and experiences.

I conducted fourteen interviews in total. Nine were face-to-face, whilst five were by phone. These households that were part of a project I had conducted in Christchurch in 2013. In this previous work, 34 households had been interviewed twice during relocation (generally before and after). At the beginning of this current research, all of these households were approached about potential involvement the new project with 14 responding positively.³² The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and two hours. Appendix One provides an overview of these. Interviews were transcribed and then coded. While these were initially loosely coded within NVivo, I soon found it easier to physically place material within themes, particularly given the different forms of ethnographic material that emerged from the following case-studies.

In addition to the above intention to explore new practices of identity formation, the decision to follow up with households that had been a part of my previous work emerged because of previously gathered narrative about their relationship with TSOs. Although not the focus of my previous research, during this project it had emerged that households spent significant periods of time talking about the kinds of support offered by different aspects of the third-sector. Households had often drawn distinctions between established and post-quake emergent organisations. As discussed in Chapter Five, red-zoners appeared to be more heavily reliant on support from these organisations given that they often lived in more badly devastated neighbourhoods and were subject to untested and complex private and state insurance schemes. Therefore, interviews with these households appeared to be a valuable route into discussions about the third-sector in Christchurch.

Where possible I tried to interview participants in their own homes – given that location can play a significant role in both the way knowledge is constructed during interviews (Herzog, 2005) and that the changing experiences of ‘home’ had been an important part of the relationship I had previously established with participants. It was also my view that conducting interviews in the home might help participants articulate the complex emotional geographies at play in earthquake-based conversations (see Cloke & Conradson, forthcoming). Indeed, when talking about post-quake identities (see Chapter Five) participants often

³² Of the other 20, the contact details of 9 were out-of-date, 5 had subsequently moved to other parts of the country, 4 did not respond to contact and 2 declined.

took me around their home to show me pictures, letters or objects related to their experiences. There is a challenge, here, in thinking about the way identity is articulated in different spaces (see Elwood & Martin, 2000) – particularly as the two interviews conducted in public spaces yielded similar conversation content, but articulated in far less detail.

The interviews were carried out in a semi-structured manner, allowing flexibility in the topics discussed. As a starting point the interviews sought to explore general experiences of relocation and assimilation into their new homes (this was one-two years since relocation for most people) and the practices of identity formation that emerged during these times. I sought, most specifically, to explore engagements with particular TSOs and their reasons/rationales for connecting (or not connecting) with particular organisations – in order to clearly establish connections between the case studies. Such a line of questioning generally opened up discussion on perceptions of local/national government's handling of the recovery to date and recovery trajectories. Often extensive discussion focused on the differences between the pre- and post-quake landscape and tended to explore participant visions of what the recovered city might look like. Thus, by default, conversation often gravitated towards beliefs of what the earthquakes represented in ongoing narratives of the city.

In order to situate the interview data within discourses and representations of the landscape, I engaged with a range of contextual data sources. This information was vital in not only forming the semi-structured interviews, but in placing the experiences of red-zoners in the broader discourses of recovery that pervaded the post-disaster setting. As such, the term 'contextual data' is purposefully broad. It included: the collation and analysis of newspaper articles and press releases, engagement with online social media pages relevant to red-zone and broader earthquake affected citizens³³, analysis of emergent policy documents, the attending of protests related to government recovery related decisions, the attendance of public forums and events and discussions with my own red-zone neighbours and peers. These resource did not seek to provide a significant

³³ These sources, namely Facebook pages, were often an important source of information sharing post-quake. They often served to mobilise action, as well as providing a cathartic form of experience-sharing community.

methodological thrust to the research, but nevertheless played an important role in situating red-zone participant responses within the larger earthquake milieu.

During these interviews, some respondents commented that they had fellow red-zone connections that might inform the project. I was unsure how to proceed, given both the time restraints of my project and the organisational focus of the other two case studies. I was also conscious that I was encountering rich and engaging narrative, so I felt a certain ethical obligation to let the project forge a trail that reflected participant engagement. Subsequently, in reflecting upon Cahill's (2007) call for researchers to embrace the fluidity of participant driven research, I designed an online questionnaire that enabled the project to be shared amongst interested parties, but was not time intensive. The questionnaire asked a series of short questions around the 'experience' of relocation and engagements with TSOs. There are obvious critiques to be leveraged at the limitations of online questionnaires in evaluating the complex emotional and affective geographies at play (see Horton & Kraftl, 2009 for a critique). Nevertheless, this approach presented the best opportunity to let this aspect of the project unravel itself in the time available.

In total, 113 individual responses were recorded in a 30 day period in April, 2015. The questionnaire was restricted to participants who had been red-zoned after the earthquakes. Designed, hosted and analysed through the online Qualtrics software system, the questionnaire could be shared as an embedded link. Initially this link was shared with 6 participants who had been interviewed, who agreed to pass it to others they saw as relevant for the study. One of these contacts posted the survey on a Facebook page for former red-zone households (which had approximately 400 members). Here it was also shared and reposted by a number of high profile earthquake advocacy networks. As such, the questionnaire not only provided valuable research information, but revealed some of the social networks and social dynamics that connected red-zoners as the survey organically snowballed in different directions.

Case Study Two: CanCERN

In order to examine the post-disaster TSO landscape more closely I chose to conduct in-depth case-studies of two strands of emergent third-sector behaviour, representing two very different threads of activity. The intention here was to shift

away from interviews which, in the organisational setting, have been critiqued as providing fragmented and detached snapshots of the intricacies of institutional life (Delamont, 2004). Instead, an approach was preferred where I voluntarily worked for emergent TSOs in order to more deeply explore how organisational rationalities were brought into being. This took on certain experiential characteristics, building on work by Conradson (2003). Taylor & Spicer (2007) argue that embedded placement within researched organisations offers a form of experiential participation that brought about new lines of research with participants, where the researcher and participant shared experiences of everyday practice. This embeddedness had the potential to enable focus not only on interactions between staff and users, but also prompting insight into how organisational mantras shaped, and were shaped by, particular organisational practices (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004).

In the context of this thesis, the idea of 'working for' is a variant of workplace ethnography that draws upon participant observation methods in a way that allowed for unstructured research encounters to emerge. The employment of this methodology follows a line of thought that recognises the difficulty in articulating and observing the unconscious practices of *organising* that contribute to organisational strategy and practice. My intention was for it to represent a stylised take on embedded participant observation methodology that has been employed widely to explore organisational life, but is perhaps most widely attributed to Huw Benyon's 1973 work, *Working for Ford*. Here, Benyon used a kind of participant observation methodology to document workplace industrial relations – resulting in a vivid portrayal of the ruthlessness of life on the factory floor and the relations that informed interactions between organisational hierarchy. Although unable to get access to much of Ford's organisational space, Benyon's efforts represented an attempt to produce a more situated workplace ethnography.

Since Benyon's work, workplace ethnographies have been regarded as enabling the complexities of organisational life to be revealed. However, they are empirically complex and often hindered by issues of access, ethics and time (Buchanan, Boddy & McCalman, 1988). For example, Boden (1994) draws attention to the ways in which research practices that are situated 'within' the organisation opens up the possibility of observations and encounters that reveal the internal logics of organisations. Concentrating specifically on the 'local' events

of relational interaction that occur in organisational meetings and informal gatherings, Boden stresses how people agree, more or less explicitly, on a whole range of organisational practices which make sense to the participants, but may not map obviously onto the bigger picture for an outside observer (see also Philo & Parr, 2000). The challenge here, in a methodological sense, was finding a way of forming an embeddedness that enabled observation of the tiny moments where participants made proposals, reached agreements, and took their own projects forward.

A 'working for' method also appeared useful because it opened up the opportunity to interrogate how different descriptions and discourses of the post-quake landscape fitted the messiness of the empirical world. One of the limitations of the analytics of governmentality is that it assumes practices of different TSOs are set within a static, complete and even diffusion of political rationalities and technologies. Here, organisational space is subsequently viewed as a kind of passive container for social action – with the assumption that macro-processes (such as conservative political policy-making in response to the earthquakes) somehow 'gets at' the micro/organisational level on the ground (see also Williams, 2012). As such, in-depth engagements in which a range of methods and observations is made possible (i.e. ethnography, interviews and participant observation) are appropriate because they engender the capacity to render visible that "...social organisations do not mechanically produce services and their clients do not respond passively and predicatively" (von Furstenberg, 2006, p. 53).

In short, my intention was to have prolonged engagement with people that would see me encounter informal conversations, shed light on the conscious and unconscious practices of *organising*, contribute to organisational missions and reveal the discursive practices of the organisation from the perspective of a red-zoner and earthquake affected citizen, as well as a researcher. Additionally, this focus was also in part a response to discourses of research fatigue and career development that pervaded the environment. I wanted to implement a methodology that engendered a commitment to the organisation, rather than expecting staff and users to share narratives to someone who was going to 'breeze-in-and-out' of their lives. In some way I wished to consciously alter the power relations at play by immersing myself in the day-to-day activities of

organisations and contributing to a relationship where expectation was placed upon me also (see O'Connor, 2000).

CanCERN represents the first of two case studies through which a 'working for' engagement was sought. The organisation occupied a complex and contentious space in the Christchurch recovery scene – seemingly emerging out of a lack of community involvement in the new and recovering city (see McCrone, 2015). CanCERN represented a space of political engagement and care, combining individual casework and practical support to connect disenfranchised and vulnerable members of the public with state, private-market and other TSO services. Their activity, at first glance, appeared to work on a series of levels and registers; ranging from providing a community perspective in government decision making, working with individuals to connect them with welfare services (including legal support) and publicly protesting/advocating against the practices of the state-led recovery. In this way, the organisation was representative of one strand of emergent post-disaster activity, as they seemingly sought to foster new engagements and simultaneously reshaped state-community relations by drawing attention to the limitations of the state-led approach.

In addition, the organisation was selected to represent this particular 'strand' because of its public association with new forms of political life post-quake. Whilst this is explored in more depth in Chapter Six, red-zone households, in particular, often described in-depth the various connections and disconnections to CanCERN and its perceived place in the recovery environment. Bolstered by significant media attention (see Law, 2016), the organisation was publically recognised as playing a significant role in shaping the new Christchurch given that it represented the emergence of new state-society relations. What interested me particularly was that this perception generated both significant praise and vilification around exactly what kinds of life CanCERN might be shaping through the engagements it fostered. This made them good candidates for exploring not only the kinds of trajectories and subjectivities that arose through the ruptures generated by the earthquakes, but also the contestations that arose as different meanings were attached to the earthquakes.

Logistically, CanCERN also presented itself as a more attractive option for empirical research. Initially I had considered another organisation that could be

viewed as being within the same strand.³⁴ However, whilst the other organisation was a clearly established initiative, their networked formation (consisting of individuals and community groups) made it difficult to carry out embedded research, given their ever-changing and fleeting physical appearances. Whilst CanCERN were similarly network-focused in nature, they had a clearer organisational structure that lent itself to more easily having a researcher in their midst – a structure that included fixed staff, defined projects and office space.

Establishing a working relationship with CanCERN was not challenging, although difficulties were faced in negotiating and finalising the conditions that dictated in what form I would be working for them. Staff within the organisation were initially extremely open to having a volunteer/researcher within the organisation, particularly given that they had “our biggest project yet” coming up. At first meeting, one of the managers stated “your work sounds really relevant...you’re talking our language...and having you on board would provide learnings for the both of us I think” (24/02/15). However, it was almost 6 weeks after our initial interview before I heard from them again. This led to concern on my part, as I didn’t want to pressure the group into finding space for me and I was unsure when to start chasing other avenues for research.

Subsequently, I spent 8 months in the organisation between February and September 2015. This consisted of spending as little as 8 hours, or as much as 25, per week working for the organisation. This included approximately 6 weeks of training. My involvement in the organisation coincided with the opening of the In the Know Hub – a CanCERN fronted initiative that sought to create a ‘one-stop shop’ that brought together community groups, state agencies and welfare agencies under one roof for earthquake and welfare related concerns. Specifically, the Hub aimed to attract those with residential recovery issues (i.e. with insurance and repair problems – often stemming from a breakdown in communication with, and lack of trust in, state recovery agencies). In reality, given that it provided face-to-face contact with state agencies, it quickly became a centre for both earthquake and non-earthquake related welfare concerns. The

³⁴ WeCAN - a group that sought to foster new political engagements and shift the political trajectory of the city, although its activities were more protest-orientated than CanCERN.

Hub marked a major shift in how the state sought to foster community recovery, and is explored in depth in Chapter Six.

Here, I fulfilled the role of a 'Community Host'. My role was to provide a first point of contact for visitors to the Hub. Such a role was initially daunting. It required splitting shifts with the two other Community Hosts and often being the sole host present whilst the Hub was open – consequently visibly representing the organisation and communicating with every public visitor during this time. Sometimes this would be a brief conversation (directing them to leaflets or information), but most often involved a sit-down conversation (ranging from 5 minutes to one hour). I was required to document aspects of the visitors situation³⁵, evaluate their case in relation to the agencies present at the Hub and arrive at a decision in order to support the visitor in 'making progress'. Generally, this resulted in a referral to a relevant recovery or welfare agency. Often, no action was taken as for many the conversation served cathartic purposes – many just wanted to vent, or were seeking assurances that they were not alone in their post-quake difficulties.

Taking on the role meant undertaking thorough health and safety training, as well as training on how to articulate organisational missions and the intention of the Hub (a kind of organisational induction). The training period took 6 weeks, and involved running through numerous simulation exercises (for example, if someone came in asking *this*, what would you say/do?), identifying possible courses of action for different problems and ensuring that I was clear on the capacities of state organisations involved in the project.³⁶ In particular, the health and safety training proved essential, as the role often required negotiating emotional, agitated or threatening behaviour. The contentious practices of state and insurance recovery programmes, and the widespread disillusionment with these bodies, had previously generated hostile behaviour. For example, in one instance, I sat with a member of the public who had just emerged from a meeting with an EQC representative. Whilst talking to her, I noticed that security guards were signalling to me to exit the situation. After discreetly escorting her outside,

³⁵ See Appendix Five for a part example of a visitor form.

³⁶ The Hub, as later described, represented an opportunity to 'do things differently' and CanCERN Managers were strong in their push that we didn't just offload members of the public to governmental organisations (and thus simply repeat the same institutional failings that had preceded the Hub initiative).

it emerged that she had calmly told the EQC representative “I’m going to bring in a gun and shoot you all” (ethnographic fieldnotes, 25/06/17). Although this was the most extreme example faced, threatening behaviour and security alerts were common occurrences.

The organisation allowed me to articulate my role as I saw fit – stating that as long as I didn’t approach visitors/members of the public specifically asking them to be a part of my research, I could be open about my background. Although this often caused discomfort on my part as to how I used, documented and reflected on engagements with members of the public (see next section), I felt at ease introducing the fact that I was a researcher who had done, and was doing, research on the recovery process. This mostly prompted positive encounters with people, who then either asked questions about my work or quickly stated that I could use their experience for my research (despite not being prompted to).

Indeed, the other Community Hosts spoke of the many ‘hats’ that made them more effective representatives of CanCERN. These Hosts were generally involved in other community earthquake initiatives and were open with visitors about their involvements. There was a feeling that these backgrounds were something which could, and should, be drawn upon when offering people support and advice because relevant knowledges came not simply from involvement with CanCERN, but from embeddedness in particular communities and the issues they had encountered post-quake. CanCERN marketed themselves as a community network and, therefore, the fact that the Community Hosts represented different aspects of the community was seen as a resource, rather than a hindrance. The idea that I was a ‘researcher’ was simply another background that could offer a particular insight into issues people were having. I lost count of the times that staff would call me across and introduce me to a visitor with a comment like, ‘This is Simon. He’s a Community Host but he’s also doing research about x, so he knows a bit about this. Simon, what’s your perspective on [insert issue]?’

Consequently, the time working for the organisation saw the utilisation of a range of methods. This included: 20 informal interviews (which I defined as one-on-one meetings with a Manager, and would either be recorded or documented in my journal diary), the attendance of 9 ‘directional meetings’ (which discussed the

direction of CanCERN and the Hub project specifically), countless informal interviews and conversations with staff (during day-to-day activities), hundreds of engagements with members of the public (I logged approximately 150 interactions with individuals³⁷) and approximately 400 hours engaged with the organisation (which was captured through over 200 pages of field diary notes). I was also provided access to all internal documentation around the Hub initiative, including notes on all interactions with members of the public (over 400 pages).³⁸ Analysis of this material, including 120 pages of material describing conversations with visitors to the ItK Hub, involved an iterative coding process (both manual and using NVivo) and the transcription of audio material where relevant. In order to negotiate the significant amount of material, I drew boundaries around particular aspects of the gathered information, choosing to focus on organisational practices, and delegating material about specific insurance issues for development into future publications

However, my role also meant that my exploration of organisational rationalities was heavily focused on the ItK initiative. Often I found myself privy to conversations about other facets of organisational life, although this only existed in snippets and generally required me to ask a series of follow-up questions, much like a formal interview. Whilst the embeddedness of the position made these conversations possible, I often found myself feeling as though I was becoming an expert in insurance practices, rebuild issues and welfare concerns, as opposed to exploring my research aims and objectives. Whilst this was an important part of the methodology, in that I was guided by the organisation and its practices, I was conscious that the Hub only formed a part of organisational life for CanCERN's staff, and that the logics, strategies and practices I observed were distinctly shaped by the project setting. How CanCERN married practices of protest and advocacy around insurance issues, for example, differed significantly in the ItK Hub from other project spaces (something that is further explored in Chapter Six). Subsequently, a limitation of this particular

³⁷ These are defined as one-on-one conversations which leads to a particular outcome (i.e. support offered/problem solved/engagement with another organisation facilitated), and does not count the more informal conversations had with members of the public/other conversations contributed to.

³⁸ The use of this material was governed by an agreement between the organisation and researcher, which included the removal of all identifying information from records and interactions, including information that might enable the respondents case to be identified.

role/embeddedness is that it provided a singular and limited focus through which broader organisational practices and rationalities tried to be made sense of.

Case Study Three: The ‘City-Making Organisations’

Engagements with the ‘city-making organisations’ consist the third, and final, case study of this research. The group consists of organisations that represent a different strand of post-disaster emergent third-sector activity. The organisations appeared to be mobilising forms of novel engagement and participation in post-quake Christchurch through the cultural, artistic and performative use of temporary spaces in the city. Most visibly, these organisations have designed and curated spaces in the abandoned and damaged city centre that have encouraged citizens to return and engage with the recovering CBD in innovative ways. These included projects such as a life-sized Monopoly board³⁹ and an outdoor dance floor/jukebox on the site of a demolished building.⁴⁰ The label of ‘city-making organisations’ is one that I have employed for the use of this thesis, and aims to reflect the ways in which the organisations are wrapped up in fostering and supporting new forms of urban place-making (see Chapter Seven).

In a similar vein to CanCERN, these organisations have received significant local and international attention and have been argued to reflect the birth of a new Christchurch amidst the destruction of the earthquakes. Yet, the status of the organisations is contested. Despite being encouraged by both local and national government as an integral part of the short-term drive towards urban recovery, they are not regarded as being a part of the long-term plan for the city. Whilst arguably being the face of the recovering city to many outside observers (and, indeed, to many locals that use their sites), their status is challenged by wider discourses through which their projects are represented as being simply ‘whimsical’ or ‘colourful band-aids’ that provide only a temporary distraction from bigger issues at play (Weejes Sabella, 2015). Therefore, the organisations represented an interesting prospect in that they appeared to be wrapped up in practices that contributed to the emergent renewal and reshaping of the city.

³⁹ Where sites of rubble are turned into Monopoly squares – see <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/7276029/Monopoly-for-Manchester-St>

⁴⁰ <http://gapfiller.org.nz/project/dance-o-mat/>

The label of 'city-making organisations' could be applied to a broader range of emergent TSOs in the Christchurch landscape. Many of the organisations listed in Appendix Four fall under this label in some way (including A Brave New City and Ministry of Awesome). Whilst all of these organisations were engaged with in some way (and contribute to analysis, particularly within Chapter Seven), Gap Filler, Life in Vacant Spaces and Greening the Rubble were selected to be approached for two reasons. Firstly, these organisations were by far the most visible and active in the post-quake landscape. At the beginning of this project they had already received significant media and academic attention (see Nowland-Foreman, 2011), and red-zone households had already shaped distinct viewpoints about their activities. Alternatively, Ministry of Awesome were present but tended to be viewed as having smaller outreaches.

Secondly, and similar to the CanCERN study in that these organisations represented the face of this creative trajectory, both Gap Filler and Greening the Rubble appeared to have the infrastructure to support more in-depth research (including very regular events, office space and paid staff). On the other hand, A Brave New City, for example, were open for a researcher to be present at events, but the organisation consisted largely of one person (with ephemeral and erratic support from friends and family) and its presence was limited most obviously to an unmanned site in the centre of town.

In contrast to the CanCERN study, organising a relationship where I worked/volunteered for these organisations proved problematic. It emerged that Life in Vacant Spaces was intrinsically tied to the activities of the other organisations in this case-study, however they sought to work behind the scenes, dealing with the 'red-tape' to make these projects possible. They therefore weren't visible to the public and were less open to having a researcher work for them. Both Gap Filler and Greening the Rubble expressed an openness to having someone work for them, but communicated a concern that they might not have any work for me to undertake. During these discussions I sensed a fear that they might be signing up to something which would result in a researcher sitting in their offices watching them carry out mundane activities. It was made immediately clear that the capacity didn't exist to regularly contribute to organisational projects. Core activities were covered by existing staff and, although volunteers were often required for particular events, both organisations said that these roles

were erratic, often at short-notice and might not actually result in any engagement with staff or members of the public (for example, helping pack down sites).

Nevertheless, staff conjointly presented an alternative scenario where the 'working for' might be replicated differently.⁴¹ This alternative saw the organisations articulate that they wanted to try and offer the kinds of insights that a staff member might get. This included, when attending events, having permission to employ observational methods and subsequently interview people and say that 'I'm doing research with *organisation x*' (as opposed to for). It was agreed that I also had permission to record interviews should I wish to. A Gap Filler staff member also offered to keep me "in the loop about forthcoming projects before they're publically released." She provided her details and stated that I was free to email her and ask her any questions I might have at any stage. There was also an offer to put details of my research out to both of their mailing lists – an offer I declined given my organisational focus.

I subsequently engaged with the city-making organisations for 4 months, between February and June 2015. Representatives from all three of these organisations were interviewed in their office space at least twice (three conversations with Gap Filler staff were digitally recorded).⁴² As Appendix Three shows, I attended 13 events held by these organisations (which included the Grandstandium, Dance-O-Mat, events at the Retro-Sports Facility, events at The Commons⁴³, as well as a number of planned gatherings at Greening the Rubble sites⁴⁴) in addition to general observational work within project spaces. During these events I held in-depth conversations with both service users and staff. These informal conversations helped ascertain how aesthetic interventions in Christchurch were being framed by staff, how users were interpreting their engagements with the projects, as well as providing the opportunity to explore pervading discourses surrounding the Christchurch recovery process.

⁴¹ Staff from Greening the Rubble and Gap Filler were housed in the same public space, named The Commons. Although the organisations are separate entities, many projects were co-produced and the staff are extremely familiar with one another. During this stage of negotiating the relationship, members of staff from both organisations were a part of the same email chain, for example.

⁴² In addition to this were many email conversations with staff members, including being 'cc'd' into strategic discussions the organisations felt relevant.

⁴³ These are all detailed further in Chapter Seven, but can be seen in part at <http://gapfiller.org.nz/whats-on/news/past-projects/page/4/>

⁴⁴ Some of these can be seen at <http://greeningtherubble.org.nz/past-greening-projects/>

Initially, during these events I was often asked to help out with in a manual labour capacity, and was privy to staff conversations and decision-making. However, these generally declined over time. As a result, I tended to spend significant time writing in-depth ethnographic notes and conversing to members of the public where possible. I made the decision not to record most of these electronically, as I was conscious of shifting the conversation from a discussion to one where they felt like a situated interviewee (see Hall, Lashua, & Coffey, 2008). Audio interviews were transcribed and combined with written notes that were subsequently open-coded by hand. This manual approach was aimed to reflect the embodied process of the research and to enable ease of bringing together material from the other case-studies.

The nature of this more complex relationship with the organisations meant that the practices observed, as well as my position within the organisation, was more limited than the previous case-study. In comparison to CanCERN where I was privy to the discussions that formed organisational rationalities and strategies, my times with the city-making organisations leaned more heavily to engagements with service-users and members of the public. Conversations held with members of staff were generally around logistical issues on the day – and even these decreased as I became an ‘old face’ and more immediate concerns took over. A significant limitation here was that I was required to chase up members of staff towards the end of the day, or via email, to have more in-depth conversations. Given this, both my conversations with staff and my ethnographic observations were less about the unpicking and exploring organisational practices and rationalities, and instead often focused on reflexively untangling different perceptions on how the event was run.

In short, whilst I was engendered the kind of ethnographic immersion that was crucial to piecing together the day-to-day rhythms of the organisations, as well as the varied meanings and experiences that staff and users ascribes to their practices, the narrative of organisational life subsequently differs significantly from those developed in case study two. In what follows, I move to discuss in more depth some of the experiences of negotiating the disaster landscape in Christchurch during this research.

4.5 Negotiating the Field: Reflections

The intention here is to pause and reflect on aspects of the embodied experience of doing research – a process that was challenging, emotional and, at times, fraught with frustration. Significant attention in recent years has sought to recognise and explore how emotions and experiences within the field shape the research process and the knowledge produced (Widdowfield, 2000). Acknowledging this stimulates reflection not just on how knowledge is made sense of, but also (in this instance) consideration of how the research process enabled me to experience the emotional, sensory, and physical processes of the disaster in new and different ways.⁴⁵ With this in mind, I offer two strands of reflection, considering the ways in which difficulties with research fatigue and unforeseen implications of working for organisations shaped the research experience.

Navigating the Research Laboratory

Many of the aforementioned issues with post-disaster research were encountered during the research. In particular, research fatigue shaped many of the interactions I had in Christchurch. It was clear that many of my participants had already been a part of multiple studies post-quake. Reflecting the pervasion of researchers after the earthquakes, and hinting at the ways researchers were beginning to be perceived, a red-zoner noted,

Did I tell you who the first person to knock on my door was? It was two days after I think [the September 2010 quake]....it was a chap from an American research company. He said they'd flown him over from Sydney to ask questions about how I was dealing with no sewage system, or something like that. You should have seen the look on my face! (interview, 09/02/15)

The presence of researchers had quickly become a significant problem in Christchurch. In many ways, the Christchurch landscape presented an attractive research setting: the city had gone through significant earthquakes and thousands of subsequent aftershocks, it appeared characterised by both

⁴⁵ Stevenson's thesis (2014) on organisational resilience also provides interesting insight into the ways in which research encounters shaped perceptions of the earthquakes.

marginalisation and differential outcomes (both in regards to socio-economic indicators and the roll-out of a contentious governmental zoning system) and was easily accessible to researchers (having a number of established universities and embedded research networks).⁴⁶ As one local academic said in passing, “Christchurch seems like the place where people feel less guilty doing research. It’s almost as though people can forget about colonialism and the like.”

Embarrassingly, however, this presence of other research projects often prompted a feeling of competition. Stories of researcher ‘snatch n grabs’ and career progression often left me figuring out how to justify my research to potential participants, whilst fighting feelings that my project was not as significant as others playing out in the landscape. In early discussions with households in Southshore, I had felt that participants were often evaluating their decisions to partake in projects dependant on how important the project was seen. At the end of one day helping out at a local community event, I noted:

This is tough. I don’t think I want to go back. Today forced me to question myself a bit. In describing my project to a group I stated that I was a postgraduate student. For whatever reason they picked up on the fact that it doesn’t make me a ‘qualified’ researcher. I could tell people lost interest in me after that. It seemed to create the impression that their stories simply helped me in my ‘training’ to become a researcher. (ethnographic fieldnotes, 07/03/15)

Reflected in my diary that day was the feeling that my project was seen as less important because the information was being used for my career development. Such was the proliferation of research projects that were being conducted in Christchurch that members of the public were often a part of multiple projects, and had even become well-versed in academic language – with questions often asked whether I was a undergraduate, postgraduate, or ‘career’ researcher. Even early on after the quakes, these questions tended to reflect a feeling that their ‘story’ could only be told so many times. On these occasions, I tried to explain the ways in which the knowledge gathered would be used and disseminated, as well as my experiences as a red-zoner. However, such justifications only

⁴⁶ Conversations with other researchers during my empirical work saw them describe Christchurch as ‘attractive’ because of its first-world, developed conditions, where issues of access, safety and access to technical resources were all easily negotiated.

generated a form of self-doubt as I felt that I was having to make an argument about why *my* study was different (or more pertinent to people) than others.

Fatigue, over-research and discourses of career progression also shaped encounters with organisational participants. Whilst TSOs were often more than willing to give their time to research projects – many stated that publicising their activity disseminated knowledge of the roles they were playing post-quake – research fatigue often shaped the tone and atmosphere of the interaction. In some instances, organisations appeared to presume that, because I was a postgraduate researcher, there was a typical organisational narrative that I was after. As one noted, referring to the fact that she had spoken to numerous PhD students previously, “well, you’re all obviously interested in earthquakes and organisations, so I’ll just get into it and tell you our story...” (20/03/15). Whilst some interviewees expressed interest at the beginning of the meeting about my research focus, it felt like this was just simply to ascertain which bits of their story to cut out. Very rarely was I asked follow-up questions about the nature of my work. Often this meant listening to a 10-15 minute spiel, followed by a question of ‘...is that what you were after?’

In some cases, research fatigue and expectations around the visit from a researcher shaped the tone in more explicit ways. Often I found myself immediately on the back foot, struggling to create a rapport with interviewees who had formed expectations of what I might want to know. My first meeting with a representative of CanCERN was characteristic of many interactions:

Simon: [paraphrased] Can I buy you both a drink....okay, sure I’ll be back in two seconds.

Manager: [as I returned with the drinks] Thanks for that. Right, so what do you want to take from us?

Simon: Well I’d like to share more than take, but that might be a matter of perspective I guess...

Manager: Well, I have 15minutes before I need to make a phone call, so let’s see who does the most talking. (interview, 24/02/15)

On this occasion, it was made clear to me that the interviewee felt as though the discussion would play out in a typical fashion. Indeed, these struggles to build a

rapport were often also reflected in the body language of interviewees. The above conversation was accompanied with a kind of closed down and disinterested body language. As I noted in my journal afterwards,

Her elbows were on the table, head in her cupped hands, and she sucked her coffee spoon expectantly, waiting for the questions to start. She had brought a pile of folders and a notebook, but these remained shut. The fact her phone and purse sat on top of them gave me the feeling that she didn't expect to have to open them during our conversation. It was at that stage I thought 'stuff it', I'm not going to bother recording this. It's what she expected me to do. I wanted to do something different. (ethnographic fieldnotes, 14/01/15)

Here, my description points towards the difficulties in stimulating engaging conversation with participants who carried certain expectations into the encounter. It was not a case of simply representing my project differently, but finding methods through which I could shift the atmosphere. I found myself thinking of techniques that might disrupt her expectations of the encounter – considering questions, practices and techniques that might change the tone of our interaction. Whilst the lack of recording was a potentially risky manoeuvre (my interview with CanCERN was the one I was most excited about) I felt as though I had to somehow shift the atmosphere of the interview in order to move away from pre-rehearsed narrative. In this instance, it was evident that an expected interaction had been entrenched through previous research engagements. This expected way-of-doing manifested in a form of researcher fatigue where, although still being open to research participation, a willingness to engage in two-way, open conversation appeared limited.

Issues around over-research also arose as a result of the USF-Exeter research partnership. Whilst the partnership was framed as a joint collaboration, the connection was in reality quite loosely defined – with no collaboration on research content or communication about research intentions. Whilst I was conducting planning for my project, it emerged that the USF student already had a predefined project, was close to completion, and thus was in a position to conduct fieldwork in Christchurch at a much earlier stage. The implications of this became clear when I began my fieldwork:

Hang on a second, have you changed your research? I'm sure that I spoke to you, or someone from your team, about this months ago...aren't you guys doing something on sexual health? (interview, 02/02/15)

This short extract was typical of many conversations with potential participants. It quickly became clear that, despite a focus on sexual health services post-quake, that the USF student had conducted extensive interviews by employing a snowball type methodology, causing problematic cross-over between the projects. Foreseeing future issues around cross-over and research fatigue, I contacted my USF counterpart, only to find that they were willing to share a list of interviewees, but not research questions or material.

As a result, often I was required to articulate to potential participants how my work differed from their previous interview, as well as stating the overall research intentions of the collaboration (which weren't obviously clear). Not only did this contribute to researcher fatigue, but often left me questioning the usefulness and ethics of the interview. The interview dynamic was often shaped by a level of disengagement from the interviewee (who often stated they felt that this second interview was pointless) and a hesitation on my part to engage with narrative they had previously shared with the project partner. The fact an interview was being repeated led to a perceived obligation that I had to push conversation in new and novel directions in order to maintain participant interest. Again, for me, the idea of 'research significance' found its way into my diary as a result:

Now I'm having to justify my own work in relation to the other Exeter-USF research and everything else going on. I'm trying my best not to, but I feel like I have to put a fresh spin on my work in order to make it interesting to people, even if it begins to stretch the truth slightly about what my research is about. Otherwise its all the same story to them. (ethnographic fieldnotes, 4/04/15)

Whilst there is a bigger lesson to be learnt here in considering how research teams might collaboratively work together to mitigate the effects of research fatigue and duplication, I found it extremely difficult to articulate a rationale about why participants might want to speak to someone else from the same team.

Negotiating Organisational Relationships

A significant, and unforeseen, part of the research process focused around dealing with and justifying my choice to work for the organisations that I was researching. As previously described, my decision to work for organisations was bound in the ways I was connected to the landscape. It was a decision that was not simply driven by empirical and theoretical usefulness but also a situated response to discourses of research fatigue in Christchurch. Such approaches sought to foster a relationship where participants could define the content of the research in some way and to shift the site of knowledge production away from settings where participants situated themselves as the subject of research (echoing a call by Elwood and Martin, 2000). These experiences working for organisations, however, were emotionally challenging and required a certain wary reflexivity when moving within the landscape.

Despite the varying relationships and proximities with the organisations, the premise of 'working for' organisations enabled a closer relationship to be made between staff, visitors/clients and myself. By occupying an employee position at CanCERN, I found the more I immersed myself in the day-to-day routines and responsibilities, the less staff and clients felt compelled to scrutinise their activities or describe their behaviour. Even with the city-making organisations, for which my relationship was more loosely structured, my repeated appearances saw staff and clients communicate to me as if I were one of the team. This was most clearly visible in the transition from a rapport where they would stop their conversation and explain something to me as an 'outsider', to the point where conversation flowed and I was included in the discussion in a collaborative way. As I previously described, the busy nature of organisational life across these groups meant that my 'researcher' label was soon cast aside and I was simply another body that brought a particular set of skills to the team.

Whilst this method was extremely useful in revealing the practices, atmospheres, rhythms and routines of organisational life, it didn't necessarily make collaborative and participatory forms of research easier. Often the busy nature of work, especially for CanCERN, meant that I felt as though I clumsily moved between seemingly dichotomous roles of 'volunteer' and 'researcher'. Although established bodies of work have stressed that all research situations see the researcher embody a 'multiplicity of self' (see Rose, 1997), the demands of

organisational life forced me to acknowledge that I only had the energy and capacity to recognise myself as either one or the other at one point in time. Psychologically, I found it difficult to be thinking about my research whilst undertaking difficult tasks, conversely when purposely placing my 'researcher hat' on I felt external to the organisation and its practices. I was conscious that, in order to have the organisation feel as though they were part of the co-production or co-direction of research, research-based conversations were necessary. During these attempted conversations, however, the tone and rapport of interactions changed: not only did I feel as though I was the 'researcher' but the staff treated me as such as well. They tended to hold a more closed conversation, before asking me about things like 'feasibility'. As a result, the movements between researcher and employee felt clunky and awkward. Even within the city-making organisations, where if I was asked to assist it tended to be for manual or menial labour (i.e. setting up an event/handing out flyers), all thoughts of research quickly went out the window in a haze of sweat and heavy breathing. Alternatively, I often felt like a detached observer when talking to service users – as if I were a psychologist, evaluating behaviour.

Most challengingly, I faced difficult internal battles when talking through often complex and emotional concerns with clients/visitors when working for CanCERN. At times I found myself evaluating the details I was being told in relation to my own research interests. Often, the notes that I wrote down to document the interaction with the client were in part to accurately record their case, but also in part framed to spark thoughts for my diary later on (see Appendix Five for an example). Often this occurred during extremely emotional and upsetting conversations for the client. Whilst my immediate approach was to try and 'forget' about my research until the conclusion of the day, the immediate guilt that arose as I tried to push research thoughts out of my mind often manifested when I would write up my journal notes. In response I often chose not to detail the conversation out of a feeling of voyeurism, or even the fear that I had somehow offered a less than authentic interaction with the client. Such practices are, of course, not methodologically thorough, but reflect the challenges I faced in bringing together research, organisational and ethical interests.

In addition, the ethically-driven decision to work for organisations caused unforeseen concerns. It appeared that the very issues I was trying to mitigate

either manifested in other forms, or were replaced by separate ethical concerns. Most visibly, I was concerned that my in-depth involvement with organisations, particularly CanCERN, placed greater demand on the organisations themselves. With this in mind, I was initially afraid of how the conversation around ‘can I work for you?’ might play out – given that my involvement would still place a strain on their resources and influence their day-to-day activities (as opposed to a one-off interview). Suffice to say, it is impossible to be an invisible bystander in the field, and my presence co-constitutes the field and inevitably, to varying degrees, altered the practices, performances and capability of staff (see Williams, 2012).

However, this concern about organisational involvement manifested in an unexpected way, including an emergent feeling that I had in some way ‘tapped up’ access to the TSOs I worked for. During a conversation with a PhD student I met in the field, I noted the feeling that others felt that their research had become restricted by my intensive involvement with groups:

He genuinely seemed amazed that I was actually working for an organisation [CanCERN]. He seemed a little taken aback that I found myself in a situation where I was so intensively involved in the day-to-day operations of *more than one* organisation. He seemed more wistful than anything, but it struck me that he thought he couldn’t speak to them now...
(ethnographic fieldnotes, 29/05/15)

In this instance, I felt a distinctive feel of uneasiness at the feeling that I had shaped his research through the impression that I had maximised the ‘research potential’ of the organisation, particularly given their well-publicised small size. In an instance similar to the above entry, a visitor to the In the Know Hub stated,

You’re a researcher then?...How’d you land a job with these guys? I guess it’s almost the jackpot for you...there must be other people who want to work with these guys as well, or are you the only one who’s able to?
(ethnographic fieldnotes, 18/06/15)

These instances both stimulated and reflected an ongoing concern that my presence in the organisation might result in the excluding of others who could potentially contribute more to both the organisation and its users. Inherent to this concern was the feeling that I didn’t deserve access to any organisation or research participant more than any other. There was a fear on my part that my

involvement might stimulate research fatigue within the organisation *and* restrict the opportunities for the TSO to bring in other staff/volunteers/researchers. Such concerns shaped my experience within the organisation. At CanCERN, my response was a willingness to ‘get my hands dirty’ by doing the mundane work (a process that at times extenuated the aforementioned difficulty in blurring the researcher and employee line). Within the city-making organisations, I became more vocal in my framing of my position (partly at the request of the TSOs), making it clear that I was one of many people working with the organisations in various capacities.

Lastly, the motivation to ‘work for’ organisations also formed a series of problematic conversations and interactions around representation. More to the point, the organisational embeddedness that arose through my methodology resulted in lines of questioning, particularly in academic settings, that sought to unpick organisational rationalities and perspectives. Upon articulating that I had an interest in organisational dynamics, I was often asked questions along the lines of ‘so, tell us, what have CanCERN been doing about x?’ or, ‘What do you think Gap Filler’s perspective is on y?’ Although I had plans on co-operative analysis and production of material down the track, I often found myself being the voice of the organisation in the academic setting. In the eyes of the audience my methodology didn’t just open up an exploration of everyday practices, strategies and performances, it enabled a depth of knowledge that allowed me to speak for the organisation and to tell the story from a particular domain of recovery.

4.6 Positionality and Proximity

An important factor to the shaping of this research is my lived experience of the events about which I am writing. As touched upon previously, these experiences both shaped the emergence of this project and the subjects that consist the case studies for it. My experience during the February event has seared vivid images of the day into my mind, and the circumstances of my friends and family have engrained a particular interpretation of the multifarious ferocities of the earthquakes and the limitations of human response to the rifts that emerged.⁴⁷ I,

⁴⁷ A short description I wrote of the moment the February quake struck can be found at <http://www.quakestories.govt.nz/%20650/story/>.

therefore, conducted this research not as a distant or disengaged researcher but as an inhabitant and subject of the context I was investigating.

The extent to which the dynamic of positionality shapes research is often determined by whether the researcher is considered an insider or outsider within the field they seek to study. These debates are well-rehearsed within academic literatures (see, for example, Edwards, 2002). However, in casting aside notions that a researcher occupies a stable and cemented 'outsider' or 'insider' role, more recent approaches have sought to unpick the ways in which fluid and changing positionalities shape methodological choice, critical analysis and the subsequent production of knowledge (Hodkinson, 2005). Importantly, here, it has become recognised that it is more epistemologically beneficial to view 'insiderness' not in terms of an ascribed or placed status, which gives the impression that one can reach a deeper level of understanding, but as a continual process of introspective inquiry through which researchers evaluate their various (dis)connections to the landscape they are exploring (Labaree, 2002). Such acknowledgements are tied to Cerroni-Long's (1994) argument that no particular position is privileged to see the 'real truth', but that "social experience and its perception are continuously 'created' by the social actors" (p. 135).

What, then, does my experiences and positionality bring to my research gaze? I argue that it brought a belief that something more was happening in the post-quake environment than dominant discourse and rhetorics of recovery suggested. Being on the ground during the response and recovery following the Canterbury earthquakes allowed me to experience the emotional, sensory, and physical processes of the disaster, response, and recovery (see Stevenson, 2014 for similar reflections). In this context, my engagements with others affected by the earthquakes, with organisations imbued with recovery associated activity and absorbing rhetorics of the state-led recovery programme, brought a desire to unpick and explore the complexities of post-disaster life – emerging not just from an embodied belief that the earthquakes violently roused a new kind of life for me, but from an understanding that others around me were expressing and practicing new kinds of normal too that differed from my own. It would not be a stretch, then, to suggest that the undertaking of this research is in part driven by my own fidelity to the event – the desire to render visible the forms of knowledge and subjectivity that help fulfil the potential of the event as something other than a return to the

status-quo. Admittedly, my rationale for beginning this PhD programme was in part guided by the belief that the earthquakes represented something *e/se* in the narrative of the city – I just wasn't sure what this was.

The ways in which this positionality shaped the research can be seen most vividly in the significantly different course that this research has taken in comparison to others in the Exeter-USF research team. In reflecting on initial project aims to map the shifting third-sector landscape in Christchurch, the USF doctoral student and staff implemented a mixed-methods approach that explored population dynamics and the role of TSOs in vulnerability reduction (Hutton, 2016; Hutton, Tobin, & Whiteford, 2016). Here, discourses of organisational and community resilience were viewed as being significant discourses that drove the research collaboration. Although my reflections do not exist to criticise this research – as Chapter Five demonstrates, the notion of resilience plays an important role in emergent post-quake identities – the direction of this research demonstrates that positionality and proximity plays a role in attuning the researcher towards different narratives in the city. Most bluntly, my experiences of the earthquakes and observations of fatigue and frustration around discourses of resilience suggested the existence of counter-narratives that I desired to explore in some way.

There is a critique to be made that my desire to bring forth an alternative reading of the earthquakes would lead to a sympathetic view of the organisations and plight of the red-zoners, in turn downplaying (either consciously or subconsciously) contentious or compromising representations. My response to this would be to firstly acknowledge that my primary ethical commitment during this research sided with the subjects that I encountered, recognising that each were trying to negotiate a complex and uncertain environment that was in part manifesting through unequal power-relations. I would then go further and say that my positionality also provided both an intensified criticality and an attunement to the different forms, distresses and trajectories of post-disaster life. Often my own experiences and readings of the earthquakes differed wildly from both organisational perspectives and individual earthquake experiences. What these differences (and at times, similarities) worked to form was an acknowledgement of the complexities and intricacies of post-disaster life, rather than an impression that these subjects were more or less closely aligned with what I considered to be the 'truth' of the event.

It is also important to recognise that the knowledges produced are inherently shaped by my shifting proximity to the landscape. Han (2010, p. 14) argues that that critical embedded research requires a productive tension derived from moving in-between what is intensely familiar and strange, “negotiating the constant fluctuations of distance and proximity... to generate the most revealing insights about the complex social worlds that we all inhabit.” With this thesis conducted at the University of Exeter (United Kingdom), such an arrangement meant that, for the first time, I was moving between intensive time in the research setting to a location almost as spatially removed as possible.⁴⁸ This shifting proximity influenced the research experience most obviously in three ways.

Firstly, the time spent away from the Canterbury landscape provided a break from earthquake life that subsequently made in-depth empirical enquiry emotionally possible. Whilst some work has sought to explore the impacts of doing qualitative research on the researcher themselves (see Dickson-Swift et al., 2007), at the beginning of this programme I had begun to reach a point of ‘earthquake saturation’. Despite maintaining an interest, the combined experiences of living through the earthquakes and conducting earlier research created a sort of fatigue that curbed empirical interest and generated an auto-pilot approach to my research design. However, I found that the shifting proximity to the earthquake landscape worked to re-invigorate interest and, more importantly, enabled consideration and evaluation of alternative methods and lines of enquiry. To design a methodology that was focused on the minutiae of organisational life would have been almost impossible given my level of earthquake fatigue prior to the programme.

Secondly, distance provided the opportunity to formulate perspectives that would have been otherwise impossible. This is not to suggest that this distance stimulated more ‘accurate’ perspectives, but that it provided the opportunity to step back and work to find some form of clarity in both my analysis and thinking. Whilst at times this prompted reflections that I was now less engaged with the going-ons of post-quake Christchurch, this distance nevertheless contributed to a sense that I could more carefully unpick relationships and behaviours. One example of this regarding the notion of a ‘Canterbury Spirit’ (a localised imaginary

⁴⁸ This included 10 months before the fieldwork period and 2 years afterwards.

of resilience is explored in Chapter Five). Whilst I had paid significant attention to these rhetorics and discourses during the recovery period, I found it difficult to distinguish talk of the spirit from discussions in the landscape – I felt like I needed to establish distance for any of it to make sense. It was only after spending time in the UK that I felt I could sit down and begin to work through documents associated with it. Even something as desk-bound as the trawling of news articles and associated textual analysis was difficult to do while in Christchurch.

Thirdly, the changing proximities caused me to reflect upon the ways in which broader academic environments contribute to the shaping and analysis of research material. Indeed, our attitudes and assumptions about what pertinent knowledge is and our ability to access it shapes the way we structure questions about how life works (Gilbert, 1994). In stating that I sought to provide another reading and interpretation of the earthquakes, I am conscious that such a reading would have been difficult to form or articulate in the Christchurch setting. Obviously this thesis reflects the input and contribution of my supervisory team in Exeter, however the immediacy of the disaster (as well as the publicised issues pertaining to the recovery) opens out particular forms of enquiry, whilst closing down others. This is not to suggest that an ‘inside’ or ‘outside’ reading of the landscape reflects a truer account of the earthquakes, but that such proximities influences what sorts of ideas and understandings that the context speaks to. Ultimately, these relational understandings influence the methods researchers choose, how we interpret and present the data we collect, and to what avenues these outcomes and narratives are funnelled into (Etherington, 2004).

4.7 Conclusion

In any empirical study the methodological choice of the researcher delineates what reality they will inevitably bring into being. This chapter has focused upon outlining the methodological approach taken into the research process, detailing the theoretical and empirical rationalities in directing attention towards specific creative trajectories of post-disaster life in Christchurch, with an emphasis on emergent TSOs. Such a methodological framework was designed to highlight the precise and contrasting ways that grander narratives of recovery have been materialised and brought into being through specific practices, discourses and relations. Put bluntly, the employment of multiple qualitative methods (deriving

from a variant of embedded participant observation) was designed to open up opportunities to hear and give voice to those who have become wrapped up within the grander narratives of the earthquakes. Their responses and contributions to these narratives are detailed in length in the three empirical chapters that follow.

In this vein, this chapter has provided critical reflection about the difference that positionality and situationality makes during the research process. A comparison of the accounts of Christchurch that are emerging – both from others within the Exeter-USF team and in the landscape more broadly – highlighted how positioning within the earthquake landscape generated beliefs and understandings of both what needed to be examined and the methods that best explored these. In this instance, adopting a methodological framework that sought to open up observations of the discursive, ever-changing and fleeting forms of relational materialism that make up organisational life sought to reveal the complexities of post-disaster life in a way that broad-scale (and often quantitative) accounts could not. Such positionalities arguably enabled the development of a methodological framework that was more open to the intricacies of recovery in Christchurch, including the emergence and mediation of knowledges and claims that work to challenge conventional representations of the earthquakes. Although laced into the discussions of the chapters that follow, this methodological commitment positionality saw a hesitation – even reluctance – to engage with common tropes and discourses of research subjects – decisions and embodied responses which ultimately shaped the knowledge produced in this thesis. As I detailed in this chapter, the acknowledgement that the project is shaped by narratives not represented by other work – even by those within the same team – mean that the knowledge produced emerges not from a detached or distanced researcher, but from a subject of the geophysical and sociocultural event practicing his own fidelity to the earthquakes.

Lastly, this chapter drew attention to some of the key moments within the research process that revealed some of the complexities of both, conducting research in a setting marked by physical and affective rifts and, the unforeseen intricacies of employing a methodology of working for participant organisations. Critically, I examined how changing situationality both enabled the project (in allowing for understandings to emerge to broader ideas that felt impossible in the

'immediacy' of the earthquakes) and simultaneously raised other issues and complexities (including feelings of detachment from the landscape and guilt surrounding the ability to parachute in and out at different stages). In relation to the unforeseen intricacies of working for research subjects, this chapter also discussed how the research was shaped by, and contributed to, discourses of researcher fatigue in the research environment.

In both this and the preceding chapters I have established a thorough grounding for discussion and analysis of the empirical detail of the research. It is to this I wish to now turn. In the following chapter I begin by exploring the cultural imaginaries that emerged post-quake. This chapter aims to build on discussions presented in the first half of this thesis by exploring how the disaster is given meaning through individual realisations and performances of fidelity. It also includes discussion about how discourses of third-sector response to the disaster shaped these fidelities and contributed to the emergence of organisations explored later in this thesis.

New Cultural Imaginaries

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the construction of new senses of life and place in Christchurch post-quake and explores how these senses were sustained by emotionally charged improvisations that invoked a fidelity to the unravelling disaster. More specifically, this chapter traces the emergence of different discourses and performativities that produced and emphasised notions of how post-quake recovery should be performed. In doing so, it explores the ways in which the attempted production of specific practices and forms of resilience reveals top-down attempts to frame the conditions of life after disaster. In response, I begin to consider other kinds of claims that began to arise after the earthquakes by examining the performance of alternative forms of resilience by red-zone households.⁴⁹ Many of these households used the earthquakes, and particularly the perceived injustices around the state's handling of recovery, to position themselves outside of the 'resilient Canterbury public' that was heralded by state agencies. Such positioning appeared to open up the possibility for alternative performances, practices, subjectivities and, most pertinently, ongoing relations to the event that seceded from state expectations.

Most notably, the intention of this chapter is to begin a process of exploring how conceptualisations of resilience reveal different fidelities to the earthquake event. Through an exploration and analysis of red-zone narrative (emerging from interview, survey and discursive ethnographic activity gathered during a longitudinal study in Southshore), I examine how, in part, disjunctures between state-generated discourses of a homogenous 'Canterbury Spirit' and the lived experiences of disaster recovery prompted specific acts and performances of fidelity amongst participants. These acts, I will contend, perhaps represent

⁴⁹ As detailed in Chapter Four, 'red-zoners' denotes households that were required to sell their properties to the state as a result of earthquake damage and predicted future danger, in a compulsory buy-back scheme.

evocations of desires for the earthquakes to persist and endure in less obvious and more mundane ways. As such, it should be noted that the purpose of this chapter is not to contribute to a burgeoning resilience literature.⁵⁰ Rather the key focus is to examine the ways in which kaleidoscopic cultural imaginaries of resilience – including the purposeful reclamation and reworking of – reveal a faithfulness to the nature and potential of the earthquakes. This includes questioning how the earthquakes may have opened up spaces which enabled the possibility of new cultural and social imaginaries of resilience to emerge through a faithfulness (or fidelity) to the ruptures that it presented.

Additionally, this chapter begins to draw out the ways in which these individual and collective performances of fidelity contributed to the emergence of new projects and organisations within the third-sector. These emergences, at first glance, appear to be complexly entwined with both: perceptions of the perceived failings of the existing third-sector to resonate with the emergence of a new normal in Christchurch, and the recognition that the third-sector represented a series of spaces through which particular representations of the earthquakes could be embedded in the reassembling city. For this chapter, the process of exploring the complex interrelationships between resilience, fidelity and the third-sector involves three threads of questioning:

Firstly, *in what ways were notions of resilience propagated in post-quake Christchurch?* This line of questioning sees attention paid to various discourses of resilience in the earthquake landscape. This includes the propagation of a notion of a localised, place-based form of collectivity, commonly referred to as the ‘Canterbury Spirit’. Here I question whether the employment of these historical imaginaries are an integral part of the event of the earthquakes, in that they reveal themselves as a part of state disaster management – with the emotional orientations and trajectories of recovery encouraged by the state’s rhetorics a part of a broader project to gloss-over the political and social fissures generated by the earthquakes.

Secondly, *in what ways were the role of TSOs wrapped up in understandings of what it meant to be resilient?* Here I consider in more depth the ways in which the

⁵⁰ Concepts of resilience, in particular on the ‘obscuring nature’ of resilience talk, have received significant attention already in Christchurch. Whilst some of this work is examined in what follows, for more overarching accounts see Hayward (2013) and Du Plessis et al. (2015).

activities of established third-sector organisations (as well as notions of community more broadly) constituted conceptualisations of a 'resilient Canterbury'. This not only questions how TSOs were presented as being incorporated into the wider governmentalities of post-quake politics, but also, from the perspective of red-zone households, examining perceptions of the roles that TSOs played in enabling recovery from the disaster. As detailed throughout this chapter, many accounts of the subsequent period in the life of the city and its inhabitants have focused in particular on how the third-sector has played a role in minimising disruption and enabling adjustment for earthquake-affected citizens (Carlton & Vallance, 2013). However, as the red-zone study reveals, widely circulating discourses of the effectiveness of established TSOs in meeting post-quake needs appeared to differ significantly from lived experience. This raises questions both about the ways in which TSOs were placed within discourses of resilience by the state and, more importantly for participants of the red-zone study, whether existing TSOs were offering the kinds of support and welfare needed post-quake.

The third thread involves questioning *what ways might fidelity be observed through post-disaster discourses of resilience?* In addition to exploring state claims to the event, I explore how red-zone individuals/households shaped particular subjectivities that saw them position themselves as simultaneously both inside of and external to what they came to view as the institutionalised notion of a 'resilient Christchurch public'. In examining how participants came to identify this discourse as institutionalised, I examine how they reworked practices of resilience to incorporate alternative meanings and representations of the earthquakes. These reworkings, I contend, might challenge both the formation of neoliberal resilient subjects and represent a faithfulness to the nature/ongoing potential of the disaster.

In exploring these three avenues, consideration is given not simply to the ways in which the state can generate visions for particular forms of life and affective experience, but also to the types of fidelities and 'claims making' that contributed to the emergence of TSOs in Christchurch. Such discussion aims to in part illustrate the conditions through which the TSOs explored in Chapters Six and Seven emerged and operated. There, the attention shifts more specifically towards creative trajectories within the third-sector.

The chapter is consequently structured as follows. The first section begins by examining emergent narratives of resilience in Christchurch, with a particular emphasis on how historical imaginaries of the 'Canterbury Spirit' were referenced during recovery. The section then moves to consider how the propagation of a localised form of resilience formed a central dimension of emergent post-disaster subjectivities – subjectivities that emerged from the ongoing and seemingly benign exertion of state power. In the second half of the chapter, I draw attention to the ways participants discussed more localised and reworked performances of resilience that reflected the perceived nature of the earthquake event. In doing so, I unpick the new forms of social and political engagement/practice described by participants that sought to embed and provoke longer-lasting traces of the earthquakes in the reassembling city.

5.2 Emergent Narratives of Resilience

In her 2010 book, *A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities That Arise in Disaster*, Rebecca Solnit examines the spontaneous connections that emerge in the immediate aftermath of extreme events. In describing a kind of 'emergent inclusiveness' she argues that history suggests that human beings respond to catastrophic circumstances "...with initiative, orderliness, and helpfulness....they remain calm...and suffering and loss are transformed when there are shared experiences" (p.56). Here Solnit presents an interesting thesis: rather than the individualistic, animalistic, chaotic circumstances that are somehow normatively associated with disasters, affected citizens instead demonstrate a sort of *civic* temper. She suggests that emergent social engagement reveals latent ethical awareness of the other and also that this civic temper forms a significant part of post-disaster resilience.

In relation to this chapter, there are two points of interest in Solnit's argument here. Firstly, Solnit points towards a sort of default philanthropic response to the disaster that assumes an orientation towards the other. Solnit argues that generosity forms particular communities, but that it goes beyond the point of mutual aid and the performance of altruism itself becomes an intrinsic part of the recovery process. The ethical reasoning behind these acts of generosity and 'coming-togethers' are thus not simply private or personal, but civic: they reflect an affection of strangers for each other, of belonging to a greater work, of

enacting something that matters (see also Stone, 2008). Secondly, Solnit draws attention to the ways in which the state propagates discourses of bestial and anarchic disaster response to justify extraordinary powers during disaster recovery. Whilst the nature of state intervention differs amongst contexts⁵¹, there is an overwhelming sense that, after disasters, the state has the capacity to shape affective and social conditions to serve particular political projects and ideologies (see Agamben, 2005).

It is this first point, the contention that disasters give rise to forms of civic engagement, that forms the basis of this section. Similar to Solnit's reports of emotional musterings of community post disaster, the disturbed environment of post-disaster Christchurch appears to have presented opportunities for small temporary utopias in which a remarkable human spirit of generosity and co-operation emerged. In the emergency of the earthquakes and the absence of stable ordering, individuals banded together to provide both material and emotional forms of support. Indeed, much of the media coverage in weeks following both the September 2010 and February 2011 quakes focused on acts of altruism that appeared to reflect a broader notion of individual and community resilience (see Thornley et al., 2015). In these early recovery phases, it appeared that the earthquakes prompted new spaces of engagement and co-operation. Significant attention was given both to new forms of community formed in the disaster aftermath and also how existing welfare infrastructure effectively dealt with earthquake related concerns. Most visibly, this coverage tended to focus on three avenues of community response.

Firstly, early coverage focused upon the ways in which established local networks acted as the foundation for both community response and the roll out of more formalised government recovery efforts. Churches, in particular, were utilised as physical focal points where aid could be both assessed and distributed and, in the longer term, provided access to emotional and physiological support when the national health system became overloaded (Parsons, 2014). Rugby clubs and sports halls, which form a significant part of social life for many in New Zealand, were utilised both for their physical space (where people could sleep and relief could be coordinated) and for the established networks of people they could

⁵¹ For example, Bock (2016) provides a thorough analysis of state-inspired 'hope and dependency' after the 2009 L'Aquila earthquake (Italy).

mobilise (see Barrer, 2012). Residents associations also became 'suburban hubs' – engaged by both local council and recovery orientated voluntary sector organisations (such as the Red Cross) to disseminate aid and information. There was a feeling here, in the immediate aftermath, that geographically embedded networks were better positioned to reach more vulnerable members of community, as well as being equipped to creatively respond to the complex needs of local populations (Dickinson, 2011).⁵²

Secondly, studies of third-sector activity in Christchurch after the earthquakes provided evidence of energetic and multifaceted contributions from a range of established TSOs (see Carlton & Vallance, 2013; Horn, Wylie, & Mountier, 2015). Many of these accounts report that the third-sector played a significant role in the short-term drive towards urban recovery, particularly as they overlaid earthquake related welfare issues on top of core business. For example, the Salvation Army played a major role in both extending its existing welfare practices (such as the provision of food, clothing and financial support) as well as providing ad hoc 'in addition' services (Mutch & Weir, 2016). This ranged from drop-in psychological support sessions, to members of staff using organisational vehicles to take vulnerable members of the public to hospital appointments. Furthermore, the Red Cross appeared integral in the dissemination of funding to those affected and displaced by the earthquakes. In total the organisation paid out over 105,000 grants (totalling NZD\$98million) in addition to its core activity (interview with Red Cross, 15/07/15). In both of these instances, and in many others, attention was drawn to the ways in which established TSOs were extending their remit by reshaping approaches and reallocating resources in order to address urgent welfare needs (Carlton & Vallance, 2013).

Thirdly, in addition to the mobilisation of embedded networks and local organisations, local residents stated the earthquakes gave rise to individual acts of generosity and, as a result, new forms of community connectedness. After the two significant earthquakes (in September 2010 and February 2011) substantial media attention was given to the ways in which individual quake victims banded

⁵² My Honours research identified that engagements with TSOs and relief agencies tended to be fleeting. For example, older populations were often reliant on food packages when damage prevented them from leaving their homes. However, these tended to either arrive unpredictably, or had to be delivered in conjunction with other services (e.g. medication delivery). In one instance, a respondent required visits from 6 different agencies within a day.

together to provide different forms of disaster relief. Reflecting what Fritz and Williams (1957) term 'disaster convergence', the immediate aftermath of the earthquakes was marked by an outpouring of charity – with locals travelling into the worst affected parts of the city to offer food, water and clothing. Within neighbourhoods, accounts began to emerge of 'post-quake communities' cropping up as neighbours connected with one another, despite many not having met previously. Participants in the red-zone study (introduced later in this chapter) tended to value these connections as they offered practical, hands-on types of support that many organisations were unable to promptly mobilise. This included help in cleaning up broken belongings, 'quake-proofing' in the case of aftershocks (for example, taping cupboards shut), and tasks that included technical knowledge (i.e. checking if the hot water tank was secured). In addition, these informal interactions did not necessitate an ongoing reliance on welfare services, or invoke the stigma of using social welfare organisations in order to survive. Many involved in this project spoke of needing a one-off 'leg-up' and were cautious of the obligations that accepting aid from aid organisations may have (many of these were affiliated with particular religious movements).

The Canterbury Spirit

In the Christchurch context, the responsiveness of local networks, established TSOs and individuals were often spoken of as reflecting a historical imaginary of resilience. In particular, the acts of charity and altruism demonstrated post-quake were said to reflect a inimitable 'Canterbury Spirit'. This term was used most widely in the post-quake environment, but was also described as 'the Canterbury way of doing things' (Kilgallon, 2015), the 'Christchurch community spirit' (Parker, 2011) and the 'number 8 way'.⁵³ The notion of a localised regional spirit formed a significant social imaginary that previously informed many individual and corporate narratives of the city – forming, in pre-quake times, a vision of community that set itself apart from both global society and the rest of the country. As I focus on here, it appeared that this distinctive social imaginary was being shaped to not just rationalise the emergent forms of post-quake community, but

⁵³ This refers to a common New Zealand idiom, where 'doing it by number 8 wire' refers to finding innovative ways to solving problems with just the limited resources available at hand.

also to galvanise citizens to withstand the thousands of aftershocks and problematic period of recovery to follow.

Discourses of a distinct spirit represent an example of what Bell (1996) terms 'New Zealand's preoccupation' to search for a distinctive personal and collective identity. Indeed, rhetorics of resilience can be seen within imaginaries of a broader 'Kiwi identity'. Mitchell (2010, p. 25) writes of the beliefs that exist within New Zealand of a 'Kiwi' identity that talks of a "... 'clean and green' country, down to earth, egalitarian and anti-intellectual in its orientations, ingenious [as in references to the number eight wire], and jealously guarding its international achievements." Inherent in these claims to a particular identity is a distinction from other nationalistic traits (particularly British colonial); an identity supposedly borne out of a "resistance that precludes the creation of a more progressive and inclusive" way of doing things in an isolated part of the world (Swaffield, 1997, p.6). In addition, Barrer (2012) refers to a number of salient reinforcers of national identity that stem from a particular form of white culture⁵⁴, where masculinity, the contemporary exploits of the men's rugby team (the All Blacks) and the ANZAC spirit⁵⁵, are embodied in a mythology of 'New Zealandism'. Most visibly, this masculinity is often said to result in a 'laid back' Kiwi persona with a 'she'll be right' (everything will be okay) attitude, meaning people do not admit to things being wrong – or, if they do, they feel compelled to demonstrate they are not affected, rather than thinking about longer term issues or implications (Braun, 2008).

In the case of the Christchurch earthquakes, notions of a Canterbury Spirit appeared to represent aspects of these New Zealandisms, whilst also referring to more localised behaviours. In particular, the 'she'll be right' attitude combined with a dry humour surrounding people's earthquake plights was said to reflect a kind of Christchurch-based imaginary of resilience that harked back to historic senses of farming community.⁵⁶ For example, the use of understated language to describe earthquake experiences was commonly argued to be reflective of the capacity of citizens to withstand and persist significant trauma and disruption.

⁵⁴ Known in New Zealand as *pakeha*.

⁵⁵ The ANZAC (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) spirit is a concept that suggests that Australian and New Zealand soldiers possessed shared characteristics, specifically the qualities those soldiers allegedly exemplified on the battlefields of World War One - see Seal (2004).

⁵⁶ As opposed to the 'city-slickers' in the larger cities in the North Island.

Words such as ‘munted’ and ‘shagged’ become common light-hearted vernacular for expressing the state of buildings and homes in the city (see Parker, 2012). Figures 10 and 12 show examples of how this language and humour pervaded the landscape. Such language was argued to be, “...a good example of our infamous Kiwi resilience, of how we face down adversity with humour” (Mankelow, 2012). Such humour was also said to be a distinguishing feature in localising the Christchurch response to the earthquakes – examples of which included the making of a popular book ‘You Know You’re from Christchurch When...’ (Raines, 2012)⁵⁷, the Show Us Your Longdrop website⁵⁸, and the good-humoured mocking of other regions ‘issues’, such as the ways in which Aucklanders responded to a minor earthquake in their city in 2013. This last event saw Christchurch citizens involved in the creation of a Facebook group called ‘I survived the 17/03/13 Auckland Earthquake’, which made light of the plight of Auckland citizens in comparison to the earthquake issues faced in Christchurch.



Figure 10: An example of humour on a local road sign after the earthquakes (Pratt, 2011)

Links between humour and a place-based imaginary were also documented in local and national media. For example, images circulated around both news and social media networks that documented local citizens to engage with road cones – a common object in the post-quake landscape that became symbolic of a city under reconstruction – in novel ways. A local reporter (Matthews, 2012) reflected

⁵⁷ Including lines such as: “You know you're from Christchurch when you sleep in one suburb, shower in another, collect water from another, go to the toilet where you can. And still smile and greet people like you are one big family.”

⁵⁸ <http://www.showusyourlongdrop.co.nz/>

on the practice of placing flowers in road cones around earthquake anniversaries, stating;

The flowers in road cones idea was improvisational and comedic... like a joke that refers to another joke. Only locals would get it. Without reading too much into it, it seemed to say something about the persistence of a particular spirit in Christchurch, about the survival of hope and a sense of humour.



Figure 11: Examples of unique uses of road cones in Christchurch, including as chess pieces (Michelle, 2013)



Figure 12: A (digitally altered) road-sign in Christchurch. The image simultaneously points towards the earthquake destruction and the notion that life was carrying on despite the altered conditions (original source unknown)

The concept of a distinct spirit in Christchurch post-quake is interesting therefore, not least because it appears to hark to a nationalised identity, but also because it propagates a more local collective that was distinguishable from the broader 'New Zealand identity'. The Press, the largest print newspaper in Canterbury, was quick to draw attention to a historic imaginary of resilience and 'bounce-backability'. Presenting narrative from an earthquake in Christchurch in 1869, an editorial piece noted,

...our Canterbury forebears got on with their lives after the quakes, rebuilding their lives and homes as best they could. They took care of each other. They laughed, they loved, they cried. They played football together and raised community spirit. (Anderson, 2012)

The point here, according to Anderson, was that evidence of this continuing spirit after the 2010 and 2011 quakes suggested affected citizens would get through in ways akin to previous adversities. It is then inferred that future generations will look back at the responses after the earthquakes for "inspiration" and evidence of a situated example of spirit in action. In drawing attention to a notion of a situated local "spirit", Anderson suggests that a post-quake Canterbury Spirit is not simply a diverse co-produced collective that emerged as a result of the September and February quakes, but rather is a localised ethic that acted as a guide for engagement in times of need. With this in mind, being a Cantabrian implied the capacity to be resilient when needed.

In addition, supplementing the idea of a localised imaginary of resilience were noticeable intensifications of identification with the city from elsewhere in New Zealand. Such identifications simultaneously memorialised those affected by the quakes and sought to recognise the resilience of Cantabrians through symbols and performances of solidarity. As well as public appeals for aid, people around New Zealand and overseas donned red and black to commemorate the disaster and show their emotional commitment to the city. For example, the website of an Auckland-based newspaper (The New Zealand Herald) changed its banner to red and black (the colours of Canterbury) for weeks after the event. Through the collective wearing of these colours, the Christchurch/Canterbury identity was re-invoked as the main symbolic way in which people could express their attachment to the landscape. Furthermore, when Prince William visited Christchurch in late

March 2011 and addressed a deeply touched Cantabrian public, he explicitly reiterated a 'kia kaha'⁵⁹ message, praising the “courage and understated determination of New Zealanders. Of Cantabrians” (Association, 2011). In these cases, the collective expressions of solidarity with Christchurch transcended regionalism and was argued to have reinvigorated New Zealand national identity (Barrer, 2012). Echoing the emergence of a localised spirit, Hubbard (2011) reflected, “What the earthquake did was to awaken our sympathy and widen it: the ‘imagined community’ of New Zealand, imagined because each of us can never know more than a fraction of the people in it – became instantly real.”

The capacity of TSOs to go ‘over and above’ their core duties were also argued to be reflective of this localised imaginary. In the immediate recovery periods after significant quakes, established organisations – namely the Salvation Army and Red Cross – became focus points for the dissemination of aid and information (Carlton & Mills, 2017). Established organisations have since been widely heralded for the ways in which they mobilised community networks to provide immediate and ongoing welfare for Christchurch’s most disconnected and seemingly vulnerable populations (Mutch & Weir, 2016). In particular, the third-sector appeared to be effectively meeting the excess demands placed upon state and local council welfare services, with organisational staff from state welfare agencies pushing those with immediate needs to funds and services offered by TSOs.⁶⁰ Such narratives of care, compassion and mobilisation, particularly from the established third-sector, served not just to contribute to the imaginary of a localised spirit of community, but also shaped an impression that community and state responses were effectively responding to the trauma and suffering generated by the earthquakes.

As such, the disaster both revealed and shaped historical imaginaries of what it meant to be a Cantabrian in times of adversity. In what follows, I wish to build on this imaginary of a Canterbury Spirit by examining it in relation to the actions and rhetorics of the state post-quake. I consider the ways these actions reflect particular claims to the earthquake, and question how these claims might represent fidelities to that event.

⁵⁹ A Māori term for ‘stay strong’ that was widely used post-quake.

⁶⁰ It was perceived that these TSOs offered a less bureaucratic route to immediate support. Examples of these connections are explored in Chapter Six, in relation to CanCERN.

Constructing Resilient Subjects

In the previous section I described discourses of a localised historical and social imaginary, most commonly referred to as the 'Canterbury Spirit'. My intention was to briefly introduce the ways in which these discourses appeared to frame the earthquakes in a way that impelled a particular form of resilience that drew upon aspects of New Zealand and Canterbury identity. Entwined in this was a sense of collective pride driven by the ostensible sense that Christchurch citizens were responding in a unique way to the insecurities and risks they faced. This talk of a historical imaginary did more than prompt individual acts of generosity and charity. It also served to form an expression of collective responsibility that promoted the idea of care and resilience as a communal project – subsequently embracing not only care for individuals but the generation of new expectations of resilience in the face of adversity.

The notion of a Canterbury Spirit, then, can and should be examined in more depth, principally given the ways in which conceptions of the spirit were picked up by the state post-quake. It appeared that state intervention post-quake was characterised by attempts to gather and maintain control in certain aspects of recovery, whilst shifting responsibility in others. Most notably, this appeared to entail the assignment of particular qualities to 'the public' combined with the diffusion of the belief that the state was devoid of the capacity to offer support. Indeed, references to a resilient and inimitably strong 'Christchurch public' were visible almost immediately after the February quake. Most notably, this came from the Prime Minister, John Key, who the day after the February earthquake appeared on national television referring to the "great spirit", "survivors spirit", and the "pioneering spirit" demonstrated presently in Christchurch, as well as "...throughout its history" (Key, 2011). This was followed by an interview in which he remarked that the state were limited in what kinds of support they could offer but was personally impressed by the "...amazing resilience and positive attitude" demonstrated by people in the city. He then commented,

Nobody complains [in Christchurch]. They're dealing with a really difficult situation so it doesn't mean that they don't want a toilet or to have things resolved very quickly, but they are incredibly stoic, they're backing

themselves to get through this. We've got to be very proud of the Kiwi spirit. (in Hartevelt, 2011)

These references to spirit and stoicness harks both back to a nationalised identity of difference but also to emergent communities that formed in Christchurch after the earthquakes. Similar themes pervaded messages from various national state figures in the months and years that followed. This included reference to the “great heart of Christchurch” (Turner, Young, & Eleven, 2012), the idea that “people of Christchurch are great people and have the knowledge they are capable of rising to any challenge together” (Fairfax, 2013) and the “immense spirit of the people” (Stewart, 2011).

Messages of solidarity and support (including calls for togetherness) are a common feature of state responses to disasters globally (Birkland, 1997). Critiques of these responses argue that these rhetorics and messages of support and recovery manufacture specific material and affective conditions, through which state authority has the capacity to shape particular emotional orientations (see Bock, 2016). In this instance, it was considered that such language created a diversion from the social and political ruptures that were beginning to reveal themselves post-quake, and reflected a deliberate framing of the event in order to instil an economic centric-approach to recovery (Cotterill, 2016). In the resilience discourses circulating post-quake, not only was the landscape conceived as catastrophe – with a lack of facilities, support and normality – but in the same breath the spirit was also said to be the salvation. The new ‘normal’, then, became the reliance on one another exhibited post-quake that provided Cantabrians with that “...knowledge they are capable of rising to any challenge together” (John Key in Fairfax, 2013)

Most pertinently, the above messages came at a time when CERA were establishing their blueprints for recovery in the city. These blueprints set the state agendas for the recovery period in Christchurch – an agenda that subsequently articulated a focus on large ‘anchor projects’ that were designed to stimulate economic recovery and encourage international business back into the city. As Bennett (2016) notes, however, a significant problem with the approach of CERA was that the public was largely understood as a kind of resistance to the real work of ‘getting things done’. In appraising this problem, Bennett considered that the

discourses of an emergent, or reshaped, spirit served to build certain forms of engagement in the city, whilst precluding involvement with the 'bigger' focuses of the state-led recovery. In addition, this argument aligned with the feeling that 'community engagement' activities such as the Share-An-Idea campaign⁶¹ only existed to further the atmospheres of charity that emerged post-quake. These activities, which were said to reflect a bottom-up 'get involved' form of Cantabrian resilience (evidencing a desire to 'get stuck into' rebuilding the city), were critiqued as existing only as a form of lip-service, with little evidence of these projects informing recovery plans or agendas in any meaningful way (Carlton, 2013b; Gates, 2015).

Specifically in Christchurch, Bennett's aforementioned argument hints at the idea that collective acts of resilience and altruism were a way of persisting the disaster landscape whilst the 'bigger business' of larger-scale recovery might play out through other actors. Such interconnections of resilience and 'attentiveness' have since been documented in emergent literature on the earthquakes. For example, Stevenson et al. (2014) pointed towards the practices of small business organisations, who pulled upon existing networks and resources, to subsist the immediate recovery periods. In this instance, they document that organisations were content with simply keeping their organisations running during recovery period due to a belief that the state had the resources and intentions to stimulate economic growth in the longer run.

In another instance, Cretney & Bond (2014) described autonomous forms of activism and resilience that emerged post-quake. These forms of resilience sought to persist the interim recovery period through local expressions of support and community, with the acknowledgement that, whilst in the longer term they could challenge neoliberal orthodoxies, in the meantime it was about subsisting the day-to-day challenges of living in a post-quake environment. In addition, my own experiences with earthquake victims in the suburb of St Martins (see Dickinson, 2011) documented the belief that local support networks were more effective because the state had "bigger and more pressing concerns than little old us."⁶² As such, emergent understandings of what it mean to be a 'resilient Cantabrian' appeared to be contributing to the emotional recoding of the city by

⁶¹ <http://www.rebuildchristchurch.co.nz/blog/2011/5/share-an-idea>.

⁶² Excerpt from an interview with a local on the street (May 2012).

simultaneously prompting and limiting different forms of engagement – not least in terms of affording a belief that the recovery necessitated direction from the ‘big boys’.⁶³

On one level, then, it appeared that notions of a resilient public exhibiting a form of localised spirit served to in part enable a business orientated recovery plan to be implemented. However, as touched upon in the previous paragraph, it is also important to note that claims by the state about a resilient Christchurch shaped social conditions and experiences of recovery in the post-quake landscape in a number of ways and across different registers:

Firstly, it represented a deliberate and selective animation of post-quake life that built an image that formed the basis for the emergence of a collective identity. It drew attention to a particular set of responses which were given a particular spatiality and said to reside in a specific group of people. Not only did this have the power to obscure the experiences of ‘others’, but it provided a form of dynamic momentum to the selected qualities/animations. As teased out in further detail in the following section, discourses of a localised resilience appeared to shape expectations of what the experience of post-quake recovery should look like. Indeed, in response to dissemination of these rhetorics of the state, such animations were reaffirmed by other actors in the landscape as well. Notably, Bob Parker, the then mayor, spoke numerous time of a “resilient” Christchurch demonstrating a “spirit of recovery” that previously existed but was “...blooming in the hearts” of all Cantabrians (2012, p. 112) – echoing not only similar messages, but alike phrasing to that of John Key and others in government. In addition, specific psychological health outcomes were in part attributed to the existence of a specific Canterbury Spirit (Parliamentary Library, 2014) and local neighbourhood events (often sponsored by local and national government) were held to celebrate the community spirit of the quakes. As I will explore in the following section, these selective animations of post-quake life had specific and material implications for those who were going through recovery, producing notions and expectations of how recovery should be performed.

⁶³ A common term in post-quake parlance, referring to the state and large businesses controlling the central city rebuild. This term later became to be used ironically, referring to the inefficiency and political bureaucracy that appeared to instil barriers to individual and community recovery – a concept that is explored in more depth in Chapter Six.

Secondly, and linked to the above, the shaping of collective affective experiences of particular spaces brought into being specific atmospheres post-quake. Here, I argue that these kinds of affective atmosphere, provoked by the state through its reinforcement of the Canterbury Spirit, conjured up and shaped senses of place, belonging and encounter. As part of his consideration of affective atmospheres, Anderson (2009) suggests that these collective structures of feeling are significant in any discussion of how governance actually plays out. He argues that the collective nature of affects produce specific atmospheres that are part and parcel of sites, flows and networks connected to how governance actually exists. Laid on top of the post-quake landscape, Anderson's analysis suggests that the formation of resilient subjects in a place such as Christchurch requires the capacity to affect and be affected as well as more tangible and representational directives. In such circumstances, affect becomes a material that can be shaped as part of the formation of subjectivities that conform with neoliberal and conservative programmes of post-disaster recovery (Clope & Conradson, forthcoming). What might seem like a collection of rather vague impressions that are attached to post-disaster rhetorics of community response and recovery (for example, seemingly tacit knowledge about what it means to be a Cantabrian or rhetorics of the economic necessity for large 'anchor projects' exemplified in the top-down blueprint planning taking place in the city), can in fact result in the development of a tone that shapes an atmosphere of response to the situation at hand (see Anderson, 2016; Hall & O'Shea, 2013).

As such, in using particular vernaculars, whilst simultaneously acknowledging the limitations of its response capacity, the state demonstrated a specific form of liberal intervention that developed, impelled, and propagated a certain development of societal agency post-quake. These rhetorics operated not just on the preformed agency of participants, but also on the affective relations that endow bodies with the capacity to act, and thus become agents (or 'exhibitors of the Canterbury Spirit').

Pertinently, the affective relations that consisted the Canterbury Spirit appeared to have specific material implications for earthquake victims. Whilst responses to these rhetorics of resilience will be explored in depth in the sections that follow, the propagation of a localised spirit appeared to imply a feeling that people should be acting in a particular way – a feeling that often could be observed through red-

zone participants describing a 'charitable climate' post-quake. On many occasions, red-zone respondents, in the months that followed the September and February quakes, rationalised their support of others in their community as being reflective of "what the earthquakes demand of us" (interview, 13/02/15). For example, in attempting to rationalise the emergence of a form of community spirit post-quake, one participant described a kind of ephemeral, place-based atmosphere that appeared to shape different kinds of affective relations:

There's a real sense of community at the moment. It's hard to put your finger on what that means...and I know everyone claims to have that...but it's something to do with the feeling when you're with other people...but also the feeling that if I needed something done then there would be someone there to help me with it.

Simon: So you mentioned that feeling of people being there if you needed something...is that something that's always been there for you?

Well, it's changed you see...so no, to a point. I guess it comes from discussions I had with people after the first earthquake. We all said that we all have skills that might be useful to one another, if that makes sense? But I guess it's also something in the air at the moment. Everyone helps everyone. The earthquakes have tied us together. (Andrew, red-zoner, 7/04/15)

Here, the respondent notes a type of feeling that emerges both from specific acts of 'community' (in his words) and a broader sense of something collective, of which the origins are untraceable. In terming citizens of Christchurch as the 'resilient public' demonstrating aspects of a localised 'spirit', suddenly traditional ideas of social belonging (which may have existed previously) were displaced by a networked language of connectivity that both set prompted and set a precedent for certain forms of affective relations. In this way, the notion of a Canterbury Spirit is at once conditioned by multiple collective affects and 'actually exists' affectively – they are/were present as dispersed affective 'qualities' or 'senses' (see also Anderson, 2016).

So, in the case of Christchurch, I suggest that rhetorics of a localised and historical imaginary has been accompanied by associated affective impression-

forming, such that atmospheres begin to envelop particular sites, attach themselves to recovery processes, and assemble tones of reason that shaped the feeling of existence in the city in ways that reinforced particular (arguably neoliberal) subjectivities of resilience. These rhetorics included an ascribing of hope to the support networks that emerged post-quake and also involve a weakening of reliance on institutional forms of support and welfare, seemingly enabling state activities to focus develop an economic-centric recovery approach. As I have sought to explore, these types of impression forming are not mundane and the imaginaries that emerged post-quake were not some kind of automatic by-products of urban life, but rather are "...central to the very ways in which cities are ordered, managed and made sense of" (Koch & Latham, 2014, p. 14).

The rhetorics described in this section also reflect a fidelity to the nature and potential of the earthquake – representing a belief that the earthquakes fit into ongoing political narratives of the city. In particular, the development of governmental recovery bodies with a 'business first' focus appeared to reflect not just an economic-orientated recovery but also to entrench an image of Christchurch as a bastion of conservative business and politics (see Bennett, 2016). In these instances, resilience might not be viewed just as a process/performance of coping, but also as an assembly of practices, affects and relations that are being collectivised in and through rhetorics of a localised cultural imaginary of response. In short, the dissemination of these rhetorics might be viewed as acts that are alert and responsive to the possibilities presented by rupture and fidelity to the event.

Yet, as well as examining the landscape for the ways in which fidelity and power might manifest through rhetorics of resilience, it is useful to question how these imaginaries are finding expression in those affected by the earthquakes – including the ways in which these imaginaries conjure up different narratives and meanings that are associated with the earthquakes. The sections that follow more deeply examine the ways in which these discourses and imaginations produced and shaped aspects of social life in the post-quake landscape. In what follows, I shift attention more explicitly to households that were forced to relocate as a result of a state zoning scheme. Through an analysis of relocation experiences I explore the ways in which participants interpreted and probed the ruptures generated by the earthquake event. There, I draw attention to how rhetorics of

the Canterbury Spirit infiltrated more localised experiences of the earthquakes and associated recovery. This involves questioning how these discourses of resilience fitted alongside perceptions of the nature and potential of the earthquakes for these individuals.

5.3 The Red-Zone Study

In the preceding section I explored how the ephemeral communities and connections that emerged through the earthquakes fed into discourses of a social imaginary of resilience, generally termed the Canterbury Spirit. There, I argued that the collectivisation of these practices shaped a type of public imaginary that became enfolded in the governance of the post-quake environment and established an expectation for how resilience and recovery should be performed. Sitting behind this analysis was the contention that state dissemination of the notion of a resilient Canterbury represented a fidelity to the disaster that enabled the state to embark on the 'big business of recovery'. Furthermore, I considered that this framing might be linked to attempts to continue a form of archetypical political conservatism, such that could be seen within the blueprint for recovery – an attitude that reflected attempts to reassert a pre-quake status-quo.

Such analysis, however, raises questions both about how these rhetorics shaped social life on the ground, and the counter-claims that might be playing out around these imaginaries. As Anderson (2016) points out, political projects happen through the midst of dynamic structures of feeling that are more than the sum of the project, and subsequently the unfinished logics of the project/ideology differentially manifest and become actualised in complex and uneven ways. A significant line of concern, then, exists around questioning the ways in which these imaginaries enveloped sites and networks in Christchurch, with attention given not just to how ideological rationales and dictations of resilience are formed but also how they are received. If discourses and rhetorics of a Canterbury spirit of resilience were used to shape tones of reason that aligned with state recovery ideologies, this section questions how these fidelities to the earthquakes were received and how they fitted within, alongside or counter to other fidelities to that event.

Therefore, the attention in this half of the chapter shifts to explore how perceptions and practices of an imaginary of resilience were experienced by a

particular sub-group in Christchurch. It explores narratives from red-zone households that were forced to relocate as a result of state intervention, including reflection on the ways in which support from TSOs was wrapped up in the experience of relocation. Significant attention is given in the early stages of this section to the expectations that discourses of the Canterbury Spirit raised – specifically because the complex interrelationships between these discourses and the embodied experiences of relocation provide valuable context to the discussions of fidelity that follow.

In grouping these households together, I am examining a collective that has been shaped by, and is constitutive of, particular technoscientific and political orders. The red-zone group is of particular interest because they appear to be those most significantly affected by earthquake damage, and subsequently were heavily engaged with the third-sector support that was heralded post-quake. In many instances it was the support that was offered to soon-to-be red-zone neighbourhoods (prior to the government announcements) that received the most significant attention in the media (see Heather & Sachdeva, 2011). Yet, the label of ‘red-zoner’, despite signifying a specific experience (forced relocation), is a complex one. On one hand, it denoted a household that had forcibly sold their land and home to the state and insurance companies through a contentious land acquisition scheme. This had serious consequences, given that the value of the pay-out was often insufficient in a context where the housing market was under extreme pressure.⁶⁴ On the other hand, the provision of fluid capital (through the pay-out) meant that red-zone households were often able to make decisions about where they wished to relocate to.⁶⁵ Given the complex circumstances that encompassed how red-zoners experienced both the earthquakes and subsequent aftermath, it would be erroneous to suggest they all shared similar experiences.

Pertinently, for those in the study, early notions of a Canterbury Spirit (and individual stories of charity and altruism) appeared to have worked to shape an impression that the support services were available to support them through

⁶⁴ The compensation scheme – a standardised process – also meant that aspects of an individual’s material and financial circumstances were ignored, and often inadequately accounted for.

⁶⁵ Particularly compared to ‘green-zoners’, who kept their property but often faced lengthy insurance battles and delays

relocation.⁶⁶ In reflecting upon the stories of support that emerged post-quake, many respondents articulated an early expectation that the emergent forms of community and mobilised third-sector were equipped to support them through the relocation process. For example, one participant stated that “I saw in the paper that others had been finding the move itself quite difficult, but that the local community and neighbourhood association were being really welcoming to people moving in, so I’m sure it’ll be like a breath of fresh air” (Helen, 9/02/15). In another instance, a participant described the sense that the Canterbury Spirit generated an understanding of what other earthquake affected citizens need for support: “You hear stories of everyone being great to one another after the quakes...I know deep down that, even if the move is hard right now, I’ll get there and people will know what I’ve been through...it’s something I can share with people” (Donna, 23/3/15). In these cases, it appeared that discourses of post-quake charity were working to shape both a vision of what support services would be available and expectations around the relocation process/experience.

Specifically, it appeared that rhetorics of the Canterbury Spirit had worked to develop and shape an imaginary of the third-sector in the city, where organisations appeared to be staging new and more positive emotional performances in the city that minimised the effects of relocation. Such formed impressions were in part constituted by instances of state reassurance that existing welfare and support services could adequately address zoning-related concerns. On one occasion, Gerry Brownlee (the head of CERA) stated, “The constant suggestion that somehow we’ve abandoned these people or forgotten about them is just the most insulting thing they could possibly say...” and that earthquake agencies (including state bodies and formal TSOs such as the Red Cross) had done “a great deal of work” to support households during the zoning process (in Dally, 2012).

Yet, after relocation, respondents drew attention towards the lack of support provided by established TSOs and community networks. As previously described, much attention had been paid in Christchurch to the ways in which these kinds of networks mobilised forms of support post-quake. Little of this has been challenged and, indeed, the successfulness of ‘community responses’ (in

⁶⁶ Including the period prior to relocation, as they encountered delays with zoning announcements and, often, significant damage to their homes.

which established TSOs are included) is still heralded as a benchmark for global disaster response (Carlton, 2013a). Despite this, households in this study often drew attention towards the ineffectiveness of the third-sector in two particular ways.

Firstly, households in the study often described a lack of support available to them as the zoning process was undertaken and announced. During this time, it was identified as being extremely difficult to get information from CERA about the zoning process, and respondents subsequently noted that no other services existed to help them either understand or navigate the difficulties of relocation. Most commonly, households spoke about the lack of legal or financial advisory services available to people affected by the government zoning scheme. In particular, households spoke about the difficulties of interpreting relatively complex legal documents. One stated, “I’m nearly 80...this language is all new to me...all I know is that I’m supposed to talk to my insurance company, but I don’t understand what they tell me either” (Chrissy, 13/02/15). All interviewees spoke about not understanding their rights to contest the zoning situation in some way, with many drawing attention to the lack of an independent organisation/space where questions could be asked about individual cases. One respondent stated, “I have no idea where to turn to...can I challenge it? It’s all hearsay at the moment” (Peter, 10/02/15). Even before the zoning announcement, attention was drawn to the apparent lack of earthquake specific services in the voluntary sector specifically. For respondents, recovery required the acknowledgement that the earthquakes denoted more than geophysical ruptures.

This lack of support from the third-sector was also linked to a second observation; that when contacted by such organisations, the type of support offered was often not what was required. Many households in the study described interactions with local church groups who had knocked on their door offering forms of aid. In all of these cases these households were gifted food and, in two cases, supermarket vouchers. Participants spoke of feeling grateful for the ethos underpinning the actions, but indicated that they required different forms of support. This was also echoed by households who discussed being contacted by local sports clubs soon after they relocated – one of which offered to hold a raffle for his family, after it heard a relative was suffering from an unrelated illness. In this instance, the participant was moved to tears during the interview, however spoke of a

disconnect between an ethos that drove people to act and the identification of what support might be needed. There was evidence of a form of public spiritedness, but one that appeared poorly connected to the experiences and subject positions of relocation and post-quake life.

Such disconnect from the distinct experiences of being a 'red-zoner' often steered participants away from engaging with third-sector and community organisations in the future. In the above instance, the experience of being offered support in the form they did not require caused the participant to evaluate what 'recovery' meant to people in Christchurch:

It made me think about who the system is geared up for. Obviously people needed certain things, like food and warmth most immediately...but there doesn't seem to be any kind of recognition that the earthquake created spectacularly different circumstances for people. But then, maybe I'm in the minority? Maybe the system is geared to catch the 99%... (Sarah, 2/03/15)

In a similar vein, many households described the feeling that the response and recovery system in Christchurch was geared towards providing traditional forms of welfare, "...in a place that, people freely acknowledge, hasn't been struck by just a normal disaster" (Donna, 23/03/15) – referring both to the complex nature of seismic activity in Christchurch and the insurance difficulties that reflected a disaster in a modern and developed country. These comments were often associated with the belief that the earthquakes had set the world anew in quite different ways. For example, 7 interviewees spoke of the ineffectiveness of Salvation Army and Red Cross in providing relevant support. These two organisations were the most prolific of the established TSOs offering aid in the early recovery periods. Yet, these households described difficulties in accessing resources from these organisations, given the nature of their requests. One respondent stated, in response to being told the Salvation Army didn't offer advocacy services, "they're stuck in the old way of thinking. They [the Salvation Army] just don't understand that we live in a world that's broken in ways that can't be fixed with blankets and hot chocolate" (Julie, 24/03/15). In a similar vein, The Red Cross were also active in providing funds for Christchurch households. However, participants stated that their requests were routinely denied on the

basis that the types of support requested was not viewed as a core part of Red Cross business.⁶⁷ As a result, participants articulated a subsequent detachment from support offered by established TSOs as well as local community groups.⁶⁸

The difficulties faced during and post relocation did not just result in unmet needs. Rather, they appeared to stimulate thought and discussion around the intersection of state and community responses to the earthquakes. More specifically, interviewees often dwelled on the notion of a localised spirit, reflecting on both its supposed existence and reasons for its absence. In questioning the absence of both support during relocation and a lack of 'community feel' in their new neighbourhood post-relocation, one respondent initially pondered, "...if we've just moved to a part of town where life hasn't changed because of the earthquakes...maybe there's no need for a spirit here" (Karen, 27/02/15). In another instance, a respondent touched upon the ways that ideas of a 'successful community response to the earthquakes' might exist as a political tool: "You start to wonder about it. There's obvious value in having a way for us to manage ourselves. It almost seems like a way to shift the responsibility onto us to manage ourselves" (Sarah, 2/03/15).

Resonating with the latter reflection, some participants drew explicit attention to the activity of the third sector in Christchurch and, interestingly, considered the extent to which they might be furthering state ideologies in their activity. Within this was the concern that alternative forms of support, such as legal or insurance advice in regards to the zoning process, were difficult given that community groups and established TSOs "... are so dependent on government funding in order to help us...they probably can't do anything too radical" (Julie, 24/03/15). Here, in a thought-process that was echoed in by others, the interviewee indicated that individuals were becoming aware of the power dynamics at play in the complex interactions between the state and the community during the recovery process. This in itself reveals a more nuanced and complex understood reality of social relations, power and policies through their struggle for support post-quake. In the following section I move to more deeply explore how these

⁶⁷ For example, they were active in the funding of winter clothing and housing materials, rather than funding access to legal support.

⁶⁸ Who were generally viewed as not 'understanding' the red-zone experience.

considerations both shaped and revealed social practices that were deemed sensitive to the nature of the earthquake event.

5.4 Alternative Performances of Resilience

In describing the ways in which post-quake support did not resonate with the nature of the earthquakes, individuals consciously evaluated not only the governmentality of the event, but also how they had become woven into representations of a seemingly resilient collective. Participants often described the expectation to feel in particular ways or, more specifically, to be supported through particular mediums given the well-publicised mobilisation of community and third-sector support through the rubric of the Canterbury Spirit – in this case through individuals and local networks, such as churches and clubs. In this section, I seek to more thoroughly explore and consider alternative practices and positionings that emerged through these considerations and reflections. Focusing specifically on counter-projects of resilience and practices of othering to the broader public spiritedness, I consider the ways that respondents performed and articulated different fidelities to the earthquake event.

For many respondents in the study, the feelings of alienation that arose during the zoning period led to a process of initially ‘searching’ for the existence of a post-quake community/network of support.⁶⁹ Many described having to ‘chase’ a sense of community – a feeling that often resulted in respondents describing a positioning outside the notion of a broader ‘resilient Christchurch public’. For example, one respondent, Helen, stated 3 months after relocating,

The resilient Christchurch stuff was all a load of rubbish. Gerry Brownlee....Bob Parker....talking on the TV...all about getting through the hard times together...it's all in the hope that the people of Christchurch just sit down and roll over. Maybe it works for some people, I dunno...but it's not for me and it's not about me. (interview, 9/02/15)

Similar to Helen's reflection that the notion of resilience was in some way linked to state rhetorics of recovery, others also described feelings of misanthropy about

⁶⁹ Blundell (2016) and Carville & Turner (2013) thoroughly and engagingly explore the ways in which the zoning process split Christchurch into different ‘tribes’. They argue that the complex zoning process instigated a ‘divide and conquer’ approach that – running counter to notions of a resilient Canterbury – made it difficult for individuals to share and act on earthquake experiences.

the notion of resilience after relocating. On one hand, interviewees tended to view the idea that messages of resilience were deliberately engaged with as a way of prompting recovery on a broad scale. This did not always immediately reflect classical neoliberal critiques, however, but rather an acknowledgement of the limited resources of the state and a general difficulty in “being able to reach everybody to the same extent” (Andrew, 7/04/15). The relative isolation of New Zealand, and the difficulty in appropriating available funds for expensive recovery activity, were often cited as valid reasons for the propagation of the idea of community driven recovery. Nonetheless, comments from households here often focused on the notion that CERA and the National-led government had reflexively identified the usefulness of discourses of Cantabrian resilience in order to alleviate difficulties faced during recovery. Such a move, in their eyes, took away from the naturalness of such activity, and instead institutionalised the performance of community. As one participant stated, “...the acts of kindness you still hear about in The Press [local newspaper], like the lady in Avonside offering her house to homeless people....I mean, well it’s great, but you have to wonder why the government lauds her...surely that’s their job in the first place” (Sarah, 2/03/15).

On the other hand, red-zoners often identified that the general discourses of resilience and the Canterbury Spirit were the domain of the ‘majority’ – to which they proclaimed they were not a part of. All of the households involved in the Southshore study discussed in some way how their experiences differentiated from those who were not in the red-zone.⁷⁰ This differentiation often centred around the belief that notions of resilience had a place in Christchurch (i.e. something was needed to combat the constant aftershocks and prolonged recovery period), but that practicing the types of resilience spoken of by public figures simply encouraged a type of insipid conformity to the ‘usual’ ways of doing things. Submissive conformity, in the minds of many respondents, was neither desirable nor possible given the process through which their houses had been forcibly acquired by government. Such opinions were not a critique of the majority (of earthquake victims), but rather sought to construct a distinction from them by making a particular claim to injustice. These claims to injustice emerged from the acknowledgement that being a ‘Canterbury earthquake victim’ designated

⁷⁰ Often with no questions specifically prompting them to reflect on this.

dealing not only with the physical effects of the quakes themselves, but also recognising themselves as particular subjects of post-disaster governance. One respondent, Brian, demonstrated this by drawing attention to the different experiences of those affected by the quakes:

I think it's always been the approach to try and let the masses sort themselves out. I believe, for the majority, recovery has been a painful but relatively straight-forward process. It follows a line [*traces hand upwards, on a 45 degree angle*]. In a way that makes it a matter of time. The disaster comes and then it goes.

But us...we're having to deal with a pretty complex set of circumstances. It doesn't mean that we're worse off than the rest of people in Christchurch...more that we have to try and make sense of things that other people don't have to consider. Remember that this entire thing is unprecedented, never happened before in this exact way, you know...people are having to deal with things we don't know much about, trying to learn what the earthquakes mean for the city. But we have this layer, in the red-zone decision, that needs to fit in in this process of recovery somewhere...there's an unknown in this that isn't about learning or coping, it's about the government...it's about dealing with rights and wrongs. It's about realising we've reached a point where we can't be pushed over. (interview, 13/02/15)

Here, for Bria and also demonstrated more widely amongst the red-zone respondents, a claim to injustice was not about a dichotomous relationship with those who received justice (through receiving other zoning decisions). Rather, it was about creating a distinction, by elevating the status of aspects of the recovery experience in order to be a part of the 'resilient Canterbury public'. Elevating particularities to the fore subsequently opened up recognitions that life not only could be performed in different ways, but that it *had to be*. Expected timelines for recovery could not be compared with others given that the earthquakes represented something other than a natural disaster for these households.

This positioning outside of the notion of a resilient public was reflected in everyday engagements during and post relocation. For example, disengagements with public rhetorics of recovery was often reflected in

comments about how participants engaged with media coverage of the earthquakes. In one instance a respondent stated, “I don’t watch the news much anymore, or anything like that, it just doesn’t apply to the situation that I’m in and they don’t understand what I’ve been put through” (Margaret, 26/02/15). In addition, this positioning often shaped how red-zoners engaged with forms of community support and networking post-relocation. In many cases, respondents described difficulties connecting with others in new neighbourhoods, given their alternative experiences and subsequent interpretation of what the earthquake represented. On one occasion, an older participant stated,

...people at my new bowls club say Christchurch is special in how it’s reacted. Well, maybe for some people. But we’re not actually part of that group...we’ve had to face different problems which have made us, well me, anyway, different than the rest. It sounds horrible, but you almost look at people talking about the earthquakes and you think ‘this is something completely different for you. We live on a different planet’. (Julie, 24/03/15)

Here, the participant describes a form of disconnect that arose given the feeling that others at her bowls club couldn’t envisage or relate to her experiences of the earthquake. On this occasion, this disconnect not only resulted in a lack of desire to connect with those in her new neighbourhood but also, as she later explained, led to the idea that she “[had] built up a very different picture about what the earthquakes actually mean for us”. Therefore, as seen within these examples, and demonstrated by many in the study, positioning that emerged from being subjects of the zoning process was not something that these households sought to rectify, necessarily. Instead it acted as a sense through which critiques of, and particular positions outside of, a ‘resilient Canterbury public’ were made.

Interestingly, the critique of this notion of a broader resilient Christchurch, and the subsequent positioning outside of it, saw respondents narrate the practicing of different forms of resilience. Red-zone households, in positioning themselves by the simultaneously political and geographical act of adopting marginality, dismissed what they viewed to be an institutionalised practicing of resilience by the majority – instead moving to describe a form of resilience that recognised both their own experiences and their ‘interpretation’ of the unfolding earthquake event.

At first glance, this can be observed through the ways in which households appeared to be reworking representations of resilience as a way of deconstructing hegemonic understandings of what it meant to be a Canterbury earthquake victim. Most notably, this could be seen through the emergence of different practices of political resistance and engagement. It appeared that households, in both recognising the limitations of the third-sector and in an attempt to rework and reclaim conceptualisations of resilience, were probing the post-quake landscape in order to embed their marginality and interpretation of the earthquakes, even if this manifested in seemingly quite mundane ways.

Most commonly, these practices were articulated as the capacity to persist the insecurities of the post-quake landscape in conjunction with practicing of everyday acts of resistance that reaffirmed a position outside of the perceived institutionalised majority.⁷¹ In the initial study, 9 households used the term 'red-zoner resilience' to describe undertaking small acts of resistance to "...remind ourselves we still have power" (Claude, 7/04/15) and in turn related this to the ability to endure the zoning experience. Others interviewees described different forms of responsiveness as being integral to feeling more in control during the recovery period. Resilience here was not simply about finding the tools to persist an uncertain future, but was rather reworked to function as a method of reaffirming the capacity to demonstrate agency.

The degree, and publicness, of this practicing of agency ranged significantly. In some instances, it related specifically to the zoning processes. Examples included writing letters to state bodies, as well as more illicit disruptions of state activity (such as tending to the red-zone home after eviction, or finding methods to delay demolition work). In others, it appeared to be more about generating the earthquakes to become more politically and socially engaged. For example, one respondent commented that he now volunteered at a local community law practice, whilst another stated he was becoming more involved in a public environmental lobby group. In both of these instances, such involvements were justified through the belief that the red-zone process revealed the inequity of state

⁷¹ Similar alternative positionings can be seen in work by Easthope & Mort (2014) after flooding in Doncaster, UK

practices and that volunteering provided a route to contribute to the complex interactions between politics and everyday life.

In some cases, this desire for responsiveness led to emergent forms of networking and community. It appeared that these networks served a cathartic purpose, whilst simultaneously launching alternative representations and performances of place and community that differed from typified expectations of a Canterbury spirit. In describing the establishment of a group of red-zone households that met to describe “local issues and things that are important to the city”, one respondent, Julie, stated,

We just meet and talk through things. We have a wide range of skill sets...there's a lawyer, someone from the university too...and we all have serious disagreements with the state of things. I'm not sure if we will ever act on anything, but that's almost not the point. I just need a space where I can talk about earthquake troubles. Where we can recognise that, yeah, the earthquakes mean something different to us.

It's all a part of learning how to deal with this....and there's also the added bonus of having these kinds of connections to talk through anything unexpected that comes up in the future...we've had some great discussions about the state of the city council, ECAN, even gender issues in Christchurch! (interview, 24/03/15)

For Julie, in particular, there is a sense that, despite the fact that the uncertainty of the future could not be challenged, that these forms of networking provided both: a way of engaging with the earthquake landscape and, a way of recognising that the earthquakes represented something more than the perceived dominant tropes of the disaster in the city. Later in the same interview Julie differentiated ‘her’ resilience from other discourses circulating within Christchurch, stating that it consisted of something in addition to ‘support in the meantime’ (which was her critique of the notion of a post-quake spirit). Rather, she argued, it reflected the fostering of conversations, engagements and agency that subsequently reinterpreted and deinstitutionalised expectations of what it meant to be resilient.

5.5 Nascent Community Engagements

The engagements that arose through efforts to rework tropes of what it meant to be resilient, raised in the last section, represent what Povinelli (2011) terms 'social projects' – whereby people produce and reclaim affective and material 'conditions of endurance' amid disrupted, fractured lives. The key difference here is the ways these projects/performances served not just to endure but to shape and embed a particular understanding of what the earthquakes represented in the ongoing narratives of both the city and individual lives. Indeed, such projects have been considered in relation to the Canterbury earthquakes elsewhere. Cretney & Bond's (2014) work on resilience in Lyttelton (a suburb just outside of Christchurch), explores how local community groups used discourses of resilience to open out discussions about how the earthquakes might lead to pre-emptive and transformative social change. In particular, their work teases out how resilience was used to generate discourses and practices of resourcefulness and sustainability, examining the attempted scaling up of 'resilience' projects to foster more widespread behavioural change.

Cretney & Bond's work, combined with the examples provided in the previous section, raise interesting questions about the projects and subjectivities that emerge within, alongside and counter to dominant narratives of the earthquakes. In the final section of this chapter, I move to more thoroughly examine the ways in which these practices might reflect attempts to realise or embed alternative fidelities to the nature of the earthquakes. Indeed, entwined within the above discussion is a conceptualisation of resilience that describes and performatively embeds a particular relation to said event. Within this narrative are references to the idea that the earthquakes represented something *more* than what dominant or overarching tropes might suggest. More specifically, participants (in both the Southshore study and the extended online survey) articulated, in various ways, a sense that the earthquake situation was marked not just by the physical ruptures generated by seismic activity, but by how the political and social responses revealed that the trajectory of the city had been set anew. Importantly, this saw participants acknowledge that their reclamation of resilience was not just a response to poor

governance but also that the earthquakes would inevitably require a new normal for the city.

In this vein, for interviewees, the earthquakes were made sense of not as a natural disaster but as geophysical events that disrupted the imaginaries that informed individual narratives of the city. Importantly, this understanding saw individuals not only describe new forms of political engagement but also involved the articulation a degree of 'disidentification' from the existing political order and the formation of a new sense of person/placement as a result. Participants often described being irrevocably transformed by the ways in which the earthquakes revealed the limitations of the state. One respondent, Daniel, stated:

Now, for me, the earthquakes are only ever going to be about what was taken unfairly from me. I understand that everyone loses something after a thing like a natural disaster. I can accept that. You deal with it and move on. But what happened afterwards [referring to the state response and zoning process]...that's changed how I think about things. I was always suspicious about the government but this is turned me into a different person...I'm more critical, more suspicious of people's intentions...this whole earthquake palava has changed who I am. (interview, 3/03/15)

Here, Daniel describes a sense of scepticism and suspicion that arose as a result of the broader state response to the earthquakes – a sense that resulted in, as he later described, "...rethinking the idea that we live in a happy little democracy down at the bottom of the world."

On many occasions, and linked to the previous discussion around reclamations of the performance of resilience, participants described forms and feelings of independence and stoicism that emerged through the acknowledgement that the earthquakes were in part a revelation of the limitations of state and private market concern for the individual. As one participant stated, referring to both local and national government, "I no longer take things for granted...if the earthquake mess means anything for me, it's that I can't place trust in them anymore" (Edith, 2/03/15). Entwined within some of these emergent knowledges was a perception that the perceived injustice and abandonment faced by red-zone households provided the impetus to question and challenge political rhetorics. There was a sense here, shared broadly interviewees, that new forms of knowledge and

subjectivity were emerging post-quake that reshaped both perceptions of, and engagements with, the political system.

Importantly, the belief that response to the earthquakes demonstrated the limitations of the state prompted a range of material responses that reflected a faithfulness to this unfolding realisation. For some, the earthquakes worked to stimulate underlying concerns about the spaces of political and urban conservatism in the city. In doing so, for households in the Southshore study, the earthquakes appeared to encourage, motivate and legitimise more innovative forms of engagement and participation on a range of scales. In addition to the emergent practices of resilience that the zoning process prompted (see previous section), some households described the earthquakes as providing the impetus to become more socially and politically active. For example, one participant stated that she now attended all local council and community board meetings – something that she “...had been meaning to do for years but it just kept being pushed down the priority list” (Donna, 23/03/15). In other instances, respondents framed the earthquakes as an opportunity to become involved in local politics. Examples included a respondent who began to regularly attend drop-in sessions at the offices of the local MP, 3 interviewees who had since become involved in local education affairs (either involvement with Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) or the board of governors), a retired couple (both former lawyers) who began volunteering for a community law firm, as well as a number of respondents who stated they were becoming more ‘politically active’ – such as by attending public protests surrounding local issues and more mundane practices, such as leafleting for their local political party. These emergent behaviours were often rationalised through the belief that the earthquakes revealed the limitations of the existing social and political life, including the lack of third-sector and welfare support available post-quake. Becoming involved in local affairs in these ways reflected not just an engagement necessitated by these limitations but also a desire to respond to the governmentality of the disaster.

It would be easy to suggest that these practices emerge specifically in response to the perceived injustices of the zoning process. However, participants often communicated a much more complex picture – pointing towards both a response to the disempowering process of being red-zoned but also the belief that the earthquakes demanded the construction of a more ‘progressive’ city that moved

beyond its outdated representations. In these instances, remaining faithful to the earthquakes was communicated through a sense that behaviours ought to embed the notion that things “are different than they used to be, through no fault of our own” (Karen, 27/02/15). In some instances, this was articulated as the earthquakes realigning the people’s priorities (one respondent stated “...so many more things are more important to me now...the earthquakes put everything into perspective” [Sarah, 2/03/15]). In others, participants spoke of needing to respond to the ways the earthquakes had revealed the limitations of existing life in the city. Reflecting on why she had joined a local PTA, a participant stated that “...it’s just a small act I suppose, but for me it shows myself that I’m doing new things. I’m *forcing* [deliberately stresses word] myself to realise that I should be doing new things in this city of ours. As if a new home wasn’t a radical enough thing for me [laughs]” (Margaret, 26/02/15). These comments reflected a broader feeling from the participant that, in order to acknowledge how the earthquake deconstructed the taken-for-granted world, she had to embrace practices that reflected and contributed to the assembly of something new.

Building on this, many spoke of the earthquakes giving rise to the notion that being engaged in new and innovative ways was an important part of remaining faithful to the idea that the earthquakes represented something important in both individual and collective histories of the city. For example, in touching a theme described by many households in the study a participant, stated,

These quakes...they’ve impacted us all in really significant ways. They’ve forced me to go to [emotional] places I’ve never been before...It’s because the earthquakes were so significant for us as a family, for us as a city, that I think you can’t just forget them...you can’t move on. That’s partly why I’m involved in the group now [local neighbourhood association]...it allows me to feel like I’m contributing to the community a bit...but it’s also about realising that we have the power to change and influence the conditions we live in too. (Donna, 23/03/15)

Donna’s rationale for becoming involved in her neighbourhood association is partly borne from a belief that the earthquakes represented an event that should pervade and endure beyond the recovery period itself. Subsequently, this new engagement reflected a move towards new practices of citizenship in that

recognised the earthquake as something other than a temporary blip in the landscape. In this case, and others within the study, the possibility for alternative practices and engagements was entrenched through a conscious reaffirmation that the earthquakes represented something more than a vicious jolt from some sort of physical, entirely non-human agent. As an event, then, the Christchurch earthquakes, for these participants, were generally understood not as ending with the earthquakes themselves, or as followed by a linear trajectory/period of recovery. Rather, the earthquake event continued, fuelled by emergent and reshaped subjectivities that reflect an ongoing acknowledgement that the earthquakes prompted the possibility, and in some cases the necessity, for a different kind of life.

5.6 Conclusion

Within this chapter I have sought to draw out, through the lens of fidelity, some of the performances, practices and imaginaries that arose in response to the earthquakes. Such attention sought to both add nuance to the dominant readings of the Canterbury earthquakes and cut against narratives of a hegemonic and seemingly homogenous 'Canterbury Spirit' that worked to both describe and prescribe responses to the uncertainties of the post-disaster landscape. In doing so, I drew attention to the situated knowledges, practices and engagements through which participants in the red-zone study realised and laid claim to the earthquake event. More specifically, this chapter had three areas of focus:

Firstly, the chapter traced the emergence of discourses of a 'resilient Christchurch' and, in doing so, examined the ways in which an imaginary of a localised spirit of resilience shaped responses to the earthquakes. Here, I argued that the notion of a Canterbury Spirit was at once conditioned by multiple collective affects and 'actually existed' affectively – they are/were present as dispersed affective 'qualities' or 'senses' in the landscape. Such atmospheres were not coincidental, however, and the chapter sought to explore the ways in which this imaginary of resilience formed part prevailing of the neoliberal atmospheres and attitudes (Anderson, 2015) inherent in the top-down blueprint planning taking place in the city. In this instance, discourses of a Canterbury Spirit reflected a claim on the earthquake event in that it both formed part of a rationality for the implementation of an ongoing political ideology and narrative, and also

represented the diffusion of a rhetoric that seemingly separated the spaces for 'community' and 'government and big business' in the city.

Secondly, I presented narrative from red-zone households as they went through the process of forced relocation as a result of a government zoning scheme. The narrative here provided a counter to the dominant stories of third-sector effectiveness that had been circulating within Christchurch. Of particular interest to the chapters that follow, participants noted the failures of established welfare networks – including prolific third-sector, religious organisations and community associations – in meeting their needs after relocation. It appeared that the 'core' welfare activities practiced and provided by established and embedded organisations neither reflected the landscape (i.e. a largely wealthy, developed setting, where for many access to financial support was not required) nor aligned with the requirements of a re-assembling city.

Thirdly, I moved from discussing how the majority of households described post-relocation absences, to examine how participants reworked notions of resilience in a way that reflected individual fidelities to the earthquakes. In noting the absence of support and community post-relocation, participants consciously evaluated how they had become woven into discourses of a resilient collective. With this in mind, participants often sought to rework notions of what it meant to be a resilient subject in the Christchurch setting – instead articulating how the practicing of different forms of *responsiveness* were both key to persisting the relocation process and negotiating uncertain futures. As I sought to tease out in the latter half of this chapter, such performances reflected a realisation that the earthquakes were geophysical events that revealed the limitations of state and private markets actors – simultaneously rendering previous representations of the city obsolete. These beliefs opened out the possibility of new forms of knowledge, subjectivity and engagement for these households, subsequently ensuring that the earthquakes pervaded life, in both individual and collective ways.

The empirical chapters that follow carry forward and explore a series of questions about fidelity that arose through the analysis presented in this chapter. In thinking about the aforementioned practices and engagements that arose post-quake – both in respect to the state and participants in the red-zone study – this chapter

has served to paint picture of complexity in Christchurch, where subjects have demonstrated fidelity to the devastated social and cultural fabric of the city in contrasting ways. Through examination of rhetorics and counter-practices of a localised imaginary of resilience, this chapter has begun a tentative process of questioning how various fidelities might be working within, alongside and against one-another – raising important and interesting questions about the ways in which subjects realise and enact these fidelities in order to adhere to the nature and potential of the quakes. In addition, the focus on the smaller scales through which grander narratives of the earthquakes are contested and reworked reveals the need to explore in more depth the kinds of knowledges and subjectivities that have irrupted from the ruptured landscape.

Therefore, in what follows, I examine in more depth the ways in which the experiences and fidelities documented in this chapter manifested themselves in the emergent third-sector in Christchurch. Whilst this chapter stands in its own right, it also serves to provide a more nuanced account of the complexities of post-quake life, where complex struggles over the ways in which the earthquakes fit into the narrative of the city could be observed across a range of registers. Such concerns with the governmentality of the event, as well as broader critiques of discourses of resilience and recovery, in part contributed to the emergence of TSOs post-quake. There, in addressing the limitations of established political and social actors, alternative and arguably more progressive performative possibilities appeared to be made possible. The following chapter, in particular, explores the emergence and activity of an emergent TSO called CanCERN, whose existence at first glance appears to reflect the changing needs and concerns of those affected by the Canterbury earthquakes.

New Political Carescapes

6.1 Introduction

This chapter examines in more depth the notion of fidelity in regards to third-sector activity after a series of earthquakes in Christchurch, New Zealand. In particular, I build on the thematic conclusions of the last chapter, where I explored the ways the earthquakes prompted different rhetorics and practices of resilience. There, I drew attention to the ways in which fidelity to the earthquake event was evident through a 'reclamation' of particular cultural imaginaries of resilience in the Christchurch setting. In this chapter, I shift focus to an organisation that emerged from a belief described in the previous chapter: that established organisations and modes of governance did not map onto a reassembling Christchurch. The analytical focus of this chapter is to explore how fidelity might be viewed through organisational activity and to examine how a particular TSO realised and performed understandings of their place in the post-quake landscape. Discussion in this chapter is based on ethnographic, interview and discursive participatory activity gathered during 8 months volunteering for CanCERN, a post-quake emergent third-sector organisation in Christchurch.

CanCERN occupied a complex and contentious space in the Christchurch recovery scene – seemingly emerging out of a lack of community involvement in the 'new' and recovering city (see McCrone, 2015). Most visibly, CanCERN represented a space of political engagement and care, combining individual casework and practical support to connect disenfranchised and vulnerable members of the public with state, private-market and other TSO services. For example, their activities included facilitating one-on-one meetings with government or insurance representatives (on behalf of members of the public), providing a 'community' voice in government meetings/planning, and connecting individuals to legal advice (about how to interpret, question or challenge governmental/insurance decisions post-quake).

Yet, their stance was not about “representing or standing for the community” but instead “...representing the perspective that things can’t carry on in the same way” (John, Manager, 3/04/15). As such, CanCERN did not occupy a austere autonomous space of ‘anti-political’ organising, but rather sought to create working relationships with state and private-market organisations to expose and work through the “limitations of a government and market led recovery” (Lesley, Manager, 24/02/15). CanCERN exemplifies one of the organisations operating in the post-quake landscape in Christchurch who were working against the government rhetoric that recovery should be orientated towards restoring the economic and cultural status-quo in the city (see Cupples, 2012). They were therefore typical of a number of organisations (others of which are explored in Chapter Seven) that occupied a blurry ground between the ‘public’ and the ‘state’ – a terrain that saw them both vilified and eulogised by both government officials and earthquake-affected citizens at different times (Law, 2016).

The attention and discussion in this chapter largely revolves around examining how fidelities might be wrapped up within the activity and emergence of CanCERN and what implications this might have both in practice and in analytical evaluations of state-third-sector relationships. My consideration here, and the subsequent purpose of this chapter, is to question whether there is value in exploring CanCERN as something other than an ‘recovery organisation’ – and instead examine the ways through which alternative ethical and political possibilities were prompted and given momentum through fidelity to the earthquake event. Sitting behind this focus is a question of whether organisations such as CanCERN play a role in mediating the kinds of subjects and subjectivities that emerge from social ruptures – offering a kind of ‘material support’ for subjects to realise and perform particular fidelities to the earthquakes.

In this case, I carefully question normative academic approaches of grounding TSO activity in either resistance or acquiescence. In order to do so, I question whether these orthodoxies might conceal the ways in which organisations mediate and prefigure alternative political and ethical worlds as post-disaster space was re-assembled. These alternatives are not simply ‘made possible’ however, and I shift attention in this chapter by highlighting the complex ways in which perceived faithfulness to the earthquakes shaped CanCERN’s activity in different ways. My analysis seeks to raise questions about whether fidelity, on

one level, might be almost universal (such as, 'the earthquakes mark a new beginning') but, on another, might in fact be a contentious, contestable and problematic series of performances. Philosophically, this might add weight to the notion that adherence to the rupture generates the possibility of radically different futures but emphasises that, in practice, the processes through which these futures are decided upon and realised are far more messy and complex. For the purposes of this chapter, this involves considering three sets of questions:

Firstly, in what way is the 'invisible' revealed in both the emergence and activity of CanCERN? How were *existing* (yet uncounted) subjects and political concerns addressed and revealed through CanCERN and its associated activity? This involves questioning the kinds of politics and performativities that were revealed and given momentum through CanCERN through the rhetorics of earthquake recovery. For example, CanCERN were publically credited for contributing to a more 'transparent' way of doing governance post-earthquake – often bringing together and vocalising discordant political and social disquiet that existed both before and after the earthquakes. However, these various dissatisfactions had not gained traction or any form of cohesiveness in the public or political domains. As such, this set of questions focuses not only around exploring how CanCERN emerged, but also in thinking through how the *already existing* (before the earthquakes) might manifest through CanCERN and subsequent engagement with it.

Secondly, in what ways were organisational activities guided by a particular interpretation of what the earthquakes enabled? This involves questioning how CanCERN probed and explored its role in the post-quake landscape, as well as paying attention to the ways in which specific political and ethical possibilities were furthered, or perhaps curbed, by an interpretation of their place in the recovering city. I look at whether, for CanCERN, this might mean considering whether post-disaster subjects, in this instance, are intentional and knowing or instead might be involved in a more messy process of probing and testing the intensities that make up a sites composition. In doing so, this chapter evaluates organisational understandings of the earthquake landscape by examining exactly what fidelity is being shown to.

Thirdly, in what ways do the everyday performances and interventions by CanCERN create the capacity for the performance of on-going fidelity amongst its users *and* the broader Christchurch community? How, for example, might fidelity be observed both through the practices of CanCERN itself and through the subsequent ethical and political mobilisations that they may have contributed to? In the above questioning, I explore what fidelity looks like through the organisational activity of CanCERN. However, with this third line of questioning I shift attention to the role that CanCERN played in pushing for, or prompting, alternative ways of inhabiting the city in Christchurch. To do this, I draw attention to the ways in which the management of CanCERN articulated the rationale for their on-going existence, focusing in particular in on how they described their work having only having a 'limited lifespan'.

The chapter is structured in three sections. It begins by exploring the emergence of CanCERN after the Canterbury earthquakes. Similar to the previous chapter, I trace the development of CanCERN in relation to local concerns with governmental and private market responses to the earthquakes. The second section is formed of two specific discussions that explore some of the more significant tenets of the organisation's activities: *The Geographies of Insurance* examines the role that CanCERN played in marrying advocacy, engagement and protest to draw attention to the limitations of insurance practices post-quake. *The Performative Spaces of Fidelity* then moves to explore a joint CERA-CanCERN initiative, the In the Know Hub (ItK). This space, designed to reflect the emergence of new political forms and practices in Christchurch, saw CanCERN embody and move within a space of public derision and contention. Finally, the chapter concludes by examining narrative and discourses surrounding the organisation's voluntary closure in late 2015.

6.2 Tracing Organisational Emergence: The Canterbury Communities' Earthquake Recovery Network (CanCERN)

First, it is necessary to provide some contextual background to CanCERN, in order to understand the ways in which fidelity might be entwined within their activity. The organisation was founded in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquakes by a network of local community groups concerned at the lack of transparency through which EQC (the government insurance body), the state more broadly and

local council were implementing recovery plans. In particular, the formation of the organisation was a part of a wider response to the ratification of the Canterbury Earthquake Response and Recovery Act 2010 – which was broadly criticised as “...represent[ing] an extraordinarily broad transfer of law-making power away from Parliament and to the executive branch, with minimal constraints on how that power may be used” (Scoop Media, 2010). Even at these early stages (three weeks after the September earthquake) concerns were being shared amongst community groups in Christchurch that legal means of accountability were being removed by government in order to facilitate a particular style of recovery that limited community involvement and subsequently curbed more innovative forms of change (see Hutching, 2010). The rationale of CanCERN, at this stage, was to consider the facilitation of an approach through which the ‘public’ might have input in recovery efforts in the wake of the September quake.

In 2011, following the more destructive February quake, impetus for a more structured approach was generated, with the actions of the state and the private market causing significant concern. The creation of the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA) caused widespread concern in Christchurch as it was recognised as a move by the national government to shift power away from local organisations (including the Christchurch City Council). CERA, and the associated legislation that brought about its existence (the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Bill), was criticised as “...stripping Christchurch of the last remnants of its democratic processes and place[ing] them under the control of a single minister” (Hopkins, 2011). In essence, CERA was viewed a form of political technology that devolved decision making away from existing routes, in turn granting its head (Gerry Brownlee, a local politician) the power to “...draw upon specific powers to get information from any source, to requisition and build on land and to carry out demolitions. It can also take over local authorities if they are not working effectively on recovery work” (Hartevelt, 2011).

Simultaneously, broader concerns with an erosion of democracy were coupled with growing disquiet around a range of social issues that were perceived to be being exacerbated and ignored in lieu of economic recovery.⁷² This attempt to

⁷² These included including: a lack of available housing (Carville, 2012a), the lack of access to central parts of the city (Carville & Lynch, 2011), the immediate permanent closure of schools due to post-quake population movement (King, 2012), the business centric focus of recovery plans (Schwartz, 2012),

shift attention away from pressing social concerns was not viewed as an inevitable or ordinary consequence of the catastrophe, but rather a deliberate attempt to expand the scope for intervention throughout the recovery period, thus limiting the potential for alternative social projects to gain momentum. Responding to a question about the widespread fears of the public that the earthquakes were being used as a proxy to entrench a conservative style of recovery, one of the founders of CanCERN replied,

...that was our fear in the early days...our whole reason for coming together at that stage was the fear that John Key [the Prime Minister], and even the council, would use the earthquakes as a chance to crack down...a chance to send Christchurch back in the same direction it had been going before the quakes. (Lesley, 24/02/15).

Consequently, the first meeting of neighbourhood associations and interested citizens was more concerned with "...making sure the same old, ad hoc protests could come together cohesively somewhere...in order to represent a shared perspective" (ibid).

In addition to these fears of the shifting of power to an all-encompassing central state authority were immediate concerns about the conduct and fragility of the private market (see also Freerange, 2011; Hartevelt, 2011). It was contended that the lack of local (council or community) involvement in the recovery efforts were allowing for particular industries and companies to unfairly profit. For example, Fletchers Construction, a large Auckland-based nationwide construction firm with connections to a number of politicians was awarded a multimillion dollar contract to control the rebuild of Christchurch, amid allegations of conflict of interest in the tender process (Berry, 2012; Project Freerange, 2011).

More widespread, however, were concerns with the conduct of the insurance industry. EQC and private insurers were widely accused of being ill-equipped to deal with the magnitude of the earthquake (see Booker & Greig, 2012). This led to widespread criticism and protests because of the time insurance companies

the lack of welfare available to suburban populations struggling with damage (Potangaroa, Wilkinson, Zare, & Steinfors, 2011), the introduction of a controversial zoning scheme to compulsorily acquire earthquake damaged residential land, the lack of transparency around rebuild decisions, the slow speed of recovery and broader social and spatial inequalities that appeared to be exacerbated by the earthquakes (Oram, 2012).

took to resolve claims – some of which are still not settled at the time of writing (mid-2017) – as well as the tactics used by companies to influence insurance pay-outs (Steeman, 2012). These included the pressuring of vulnerable claimants to take ‘low-ball offers’, pay-outs based on ‘rateable value’ instead of ‘market value’⁷³, retrospective refusals to pay-out claims over building conditions⁷⁴, the employment of contractors with no building experience to make assessments, refusals to acknowledge shoddy repairs completed by insurance contractors and (explored later) control over interpretation of language in insurance claims (Miles, 2016). Pertinently, this last point saw insurance companies collectively interpret ‘replacement value’ as the cost to replace at the time of purchase/installation, subsequently refusing to pay for goods whose replacement cost more 20 years later (Miles, 2012). Additionally, the financial collapse of the second largest residential insurer in New Zealand, AML, in late 2011, saw the establishment of a government agency, Southern Response, to settle the claims of the failed company. This move, whilst ensuring that claims could be settled in time, further conflated the boundaries between state and the private market post-quake.

In response to these broader concerns, CanCERN became a formal organisation in mid-2011. It consisted of 14 separate community groups and neighbourhood associations and was publically supported by 12 others.⁷⁵ Its funding came from a range of philanthropic sources, including The Tindall Foundation (a family trust)⁷⁶, The Todd Foundation (a family trust with a ‘earthquake recovery’ focus)⁷⁷ and The Hugh Green Foundation (a charitable trust established to help those in ‘extreme’ need).⁷⁸ In an attempt to bring together concerns with the insurance industry post-quake and the methods through which local and central government where instilling recovery, CanCERN initially marketed itself as a community organisation advocating for the prioritisation of homeowners in residential recovery decision-making. Their organisational aims consequently involved: identifying and facilitating community based solutions to earthquake related

⁷³ For which rateable values were considered to be largely out of date and therefore significantly too low.

⁷⁴ A common technique used by insurance companies was to employ an engineer who stated that houses were not up to standard prior to the quake, or that damage was not quake related, therefore ceasing any responsibility with the insurer.

⁷⁵ A list of these can be seen at <http://cancern.org.nz/index.html%3Fp=7107.html>

⁷⁶ <http://tindall.org.nz/>

⁷⁷ www.toddfoundation.org.nz

⁷⁸ <http://www.hgfoundation.co.nz/>

issues, establishing communication and facilitating engagement between affected communities and other parties, providing knowledge to shape community and state funded welfare services, promoting research and education to improve understandings of best practice disaster recovery and sourcing funds for projects that supported and contributed to an increased role for 'community' in future Christchurch.⁷⁹

These organisational aims worked to generate a more forward focused approach than other advocacy and protest groups in Christchurch – combining individual case-work and 'in the now' support to draw attention towards the limitations of the government-led recovery and simultaneously provide an alternative route forward. WeCAN⁸⁰, perhaps one of the other more recognisable emergent groups with a residential recovery agenda in Christchurch, were used by CanCERN to demonstrate a different pathway of advocacy that was seen to be more orientated towards protest and mass mobilisation. As CanCERN staff member stated,

...our main rationale is to work on behalf of communities to make sure our needs and views reach those who make the decisions...but also to make sure that their thinking reaches the community. Our role isn't to represent the people, but to work to help make things happen for everyone's benefit...we represent a perspective that's been missing from Christchurch for a long time...but we want to be something more than the rabble. (Olivia, 21/05/15)

Although the notion of 'representing a perspective' is explored further in the following section, CanCERN adopted a unique position as a broker between different earthquake recovery agencies and the broader public. This role was seen as necessary because of the significant levels of distrust in government services after the earthquakes in Christchurch and the complex and ever-changing nature of earthquake recovery processes. Here, intricate and convoluted insurance processes (both in relation to EQC and the private market) meant many individuals did not understand or comprehend the options that were available to them. Most significantly, this resulted in CanCERN's involvement in three projects.

⁷⁹ A more in-depth description of these aims can be found at <http://cancern.org.nz/>

⁸⁰ <http://www.wecan-nz.com/>

Breakthrough

Firstly, Breakthrough was initially designed as a collaborative project with Southern Response, the government-headed insurance company that replaced AML. The initiative offers assistance to any individual/household who is displeased with how their claims were being handled or who were concerned with the lack of progress being made with their insurance claim. The aim of the service is to understand the difficulties from the homeowner's perspective and facilitate a process that deals with the 'stumbling blocks'. CanCERN staff act as brokers who can access legal and technical advice, facilitate meetings with insurers and EQC, bring managers and technical staff to the table, and ensure there are agreed actions for progress. As such, CanCERN stressed that the initiative existed as a 'facilitation service' rather than an advocacy service as they refused to negotiate or push for specific outcomes. As their website states,

We are able to facilitate a constructive discussion where homeowners can have the conversation they need to have with the right people at Southern Response. There is one collective aim – to understand where the claim is at from the homeowner's perspective and what needs to happen for the claim to progress to the next stage (CanCERN, 2015a).

Practically, this support often took the form of connecting those who refused to communicate with Southern Response, or were seeking to take Southern Response to court over their conduct (this was a common method in Christchurch. A number of community groups sought class action against the actions of insurance companies post-quake⁸¹). Figure 13 shows an early advertisement for the initiative.

In late 2016, Breakthrough morphed into an individual organisation (entitled Breakthrough Services) run by former staff of CanCERN.⁸² Whilst the remit of the organisation had not changed, the scope of their reach had increased. Now, most insurance companies involved in the rebuild contracted Breakthrough to facilitate progress with problem claims or claimants. This service was able to run thanks to significant funding from Southern Response and individual contracts with other

⁸¹ For example, see <http://www.savemyhomenz.org/>

⁸² <http://breakthroughservices.co.nz/>

insurance companies on a case-by-case basis. This project in itself raises significant questions about the possible incorporation into the tenets of the private market – questions which are explored extensively later in the chapter.

Breakthrough.

- ***Has your progress with Southern Response stumbled to a halt?***
- ***Do you feel like you're not heard or respected, or can't be bothered any more?***
- ***Do you wish you could have a frank and open conversation with the people who can make decisions?***
- ***Do you need support to get things moving again?***

If any of these questions resonate with you, then Breakthrough might be able to help.

.....

What is it?

Breakthrough is a pilot project between the independent community organisation CanCERN and Southern Response that puts the homeowner's needs at the centre. It enables you to tell them where it's gone wrong for you and how it could be better. It gets everyone on the same page so that common sense solutions can be worked out.

.....

Does it work?

For one family, a big leap of faith and two facilitated Breakthrough meetings ended two and a half years of no progress:

"This is a phenomenal programme. We have found our insurer willing to listen. We are moving forward now, unstuck after many years. CanCERN were incredibly supportive, following up our questions and ensuring timely answers were provided."

– Jan, Breakthrough participant

Figure 13: A flyer advertising the Breakthrough initiative

Let's Find and Fix

The core tenet of Let's Find and Fix was to connect earthquake affected citizens with temporary welfare services. The project had a particular focus on repairing homes that had yet to be addressed by government or insurance contractors.⁸³ It sought to enable people to have approved temporary work done, without it impacting their final insurance settlement. Prior to this, the cost of temporary repairs may have been counted as part of their settlement for earthquake damages but, under the Let's Find & Fix programme, repairs would not be taken

⁸³ <http://www.rebuildchristchurch.co.nz/blog/2014/4/let-s-find-and-fix>

into account. The project, facilitated by CanCERN, saw a coming together of resources from the Christchurch Earthquake Appeal Trust (a public charity established post-quake), Red Cross, Community Energy Action (a NGO), the Christchurch City Council, CERA, EQC, and representatives from insurance companies. During 2012 and 2013, Let's Find & Fix contractors temporarily repaired over 400 houses and completed over 500 individual repairs (as more than one repair was done on some properties). Resultantly it provided immediate relief whilst more long-standing repairs were negotiated with insurance companies.

In the Know

The In the Know (ItK) initiative was perhaps the most well-recognised of CanCERN's enterprises. ItK began in 2012 in response to the lack of information available to earthquake affected residents. This lack of knowledge was not limited to any one particular organisation, but reflected both a lack of awareness of the welfare options available to affected citizens, as well as the complex issues surrounding land zoning and insurance claims. As the ItK website stated,

This earthquake has thrown up so much for us to contend with; policies, building codes, flood mitigation and a whole bunch of newly unearthed words, terms and acronyms like liquefaction, IFV, ILV, DOA, as new and jack and pack, just to pull out a few. We have had to come to grips with new people being in our lives; insurers, bankers, valuers, builders and engineers. Most of us have folders full of paper-work, a lot of it not easily understood. Many of us are ridiculously tired and quite a few of us need a little more help (CanCERN, 2015b).

In response, CanCERN proposed to CERA an initiative that would create a 'community team' dedicated to gathering and disseminating information related to both welfare options and about the residential rebuild and repair process more broadly. Initially this took the form a website through which members of the public could post questions related to the earthquake recovery process. This soon developed into the creation of a singular, shared space where representatives of various welfare, community, private market and state organisations would be situated. In total, representatives from a range of 18 organisations could be

present at any one time⁸⁴, and the space was designed so that members of these organisations were both visible and accessible to anyone entering the Hub space.⁸⁵

The intention of the Hub was to create a space fronted by CanCERN through which members of the public could communicate face-to-face with recovery organisations and, importantly, organisations could communicate with one another. This site was also engaged as an ‘learning point’ with public seminars held weekly by well-known figures in the recovery efforts, in the attempt to foster a space where both information could be disseminated and questions/clarifications could be raised.⁸⁶ The rationale behind the project was that CanCERN were well equipped to finding creative solutions to challenges facing residents, given its established position as a broker between agencies and through an accumulation of insights into the various cultures of the agencies involved (Dann, 2014). The idea was unique to the post-quake landscape but emerged in part from established successes elsewhere internationally – such as Bristol’s HUB responses to homelessness in the 1990s (Pannell & Parry, 1999). Figure 14 (over page) shows an early advertisement for this initiative, including an overview of the kinds of services and agencies that were housed at the Hub..

Importantly, the Hub was located in Eastgate Shopping Mall, in a lower-socio-economic neighbourhood on the eastern side of town. This area had been badly hit by the earthquakes and had been locally termed as a part of the ‘forgotten suburbs’ given the apparent state prioritisation of the centre of town (Cairns & Mann, 2015). The location was a statement in itself, representing the idea that the focus of recovery was shifting to those most marginalised by the earthquakes and those ignored during the initial recovery efforts.

⁸⁴ Including the Residential Advisory Service (an independent law advice service), EQC, the city council, the Human Rights Commission and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (representing local Ngāi Tahu Maori populations).

⁸⁵ A video overview of the ItK Hub, including a brief interview with a CanCERN manager can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TgFZPFkccS4>

⁸⁶ Videos of these seminars are all available at <http://intheknow.org.nz/seminar-videos/>

inthe know | **hub**
Residential repair and rebuild information

**Need information to progress your earthquake repair or rebuild?
Talk face to face with earthquake recovery agencies and support
services who can help you with your residential earthquake claim.**

**Open from 20 April 2015
Eastgate Shopping Centre**
Monday - Wednesday, 9am – 6pm
Thursday, 9am – 8pm
(Closed Friday – Sunday and public holidays)

Seminars on residential repair and rebuild topics will be held weekly.

The In the Know Hub is a community-led initiative supported by:

- CanCERN
- Canterbury Earthquake Temporary Accommodation Service
- Earthquake Support Coordination Service
- Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority
- Christchurch City Council
- Residential Advisory Service
- Insurance Council of New Zealand
- Canterbury Community Trust
- Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
- Earthquake Commission – to make an appointment call 0800 326 243

Not all agencies are at the Hub every day. Please visit intheknow.org.nz or call **0800 777 482 / 0800 777 HUB** for more information.

Figure 14: Advertisement for the ItK Hub.

Despite extensive criticism that CanCERN were hopping into bed with state agencies by fronting a space which housed recovery organisations (later explored), the Hub was visited informally by thousands of citizens in the 5 months it was open. This included approximately 500 direct sit-down engagements with CanCERN members of staff. These engagements saw CanCERN staff facilitating connections for the affected citizen with appropriate welfare and government services. Commonly, however, this also involved emotional support before or after the individual/family had connected with earthquake services. Engagements with EQC and insurance companies, through which reparations for lost homes and belongings were being discussed, were often emotionally charged (see Chapter Four).

6.3 Fostering New Engagements

From the preceding section we can gather that the role of CanCERN in Christchurch focused most visibly on facilitating residential home repairs and rebuilds. The inherent focus of these services on homeowners reflected the

nature of the earthquakes in Christchurch – where substantial difficulties in the recovery efforts were focused upon complexities within, and broader discordance with, the government and private market insurance processes. Yet, an extensive look at the records of those who engaged with CanCERN, particularly within the In the Know setting, indicates more complex connections between earthquake-related issues and broader welfare and political envisagements. What I wish to introduce in this section, before exploring organisational practices and rationalities in more detail, are some of the encounters that CanCERN prompted that may not have been straight-forwardly earthquake related.

In particular, CanCERN might at first glance be registered as a classic case of the incorporation of the third-sector into the tenets of state control. However, a closer look at the methods through which CanCERN addressed post-quake welfare reveals that the rubric of ‘earthquake recovery’ enabled the recognition of previously unaddressed political and social practices/needs. Most prominently, this could be seen through the ways in which existing welfare issues and gaps were addressed in conjunction with earthquake recovery. An in-depth examination of records documenting interactions with clients at the ItK Hub (n= 456) illustrates that CanCERN staff noted that with approximately 32% of interactions visitors noted extenuating concerns.

What defined the label of extenuating circumstances varied. Firstly, it was used to refer to individuals with existing concerns that existing recovery mechanisms did not account for (such as the availability of emergency welfare support). Most commonly, this was observed through the presentation of individuals with debilitating or chronic illnesses who had not been identified as needing extra support post-quake. Secondly, this referred to individuals and households that had ‘fallen through the cracks’ prior to the earthquakes. These were typically low-income households that were eligible for welfare and support prior to the earthquakes but, for various reasons, had either been excluded or were unaware of welfare eligibility. Reflecting on both of these welfare gaps, and in describing the kinds of individuals that come out of the woodwork, one CanCERN staff member stated,

In some ways the earthquakes have given publicity to the range of help you have access to...you know, both government and community kinds of

help. A day wouldn't go by here that someone either comes in or rings us up with a desperate, heart-breaking story. It makes you question yourself...how did we...no, scrap that, how did the existing welfare people not identify who these people were before the earthquakes? Sometimes it takes an earthquake, I think, to realise things were kinda broken anyway...

Simon: Like the lady with cancer who came in the other day...

Exactly, like her. She's got cancer herself, looking after her sick, sick mum...didn't even know she could get support with that...and, because of the earthquakes, she's living in a house without power...it's those kinds of cases where you go...'what can we do to stop that happening again?' It's not our job to connect her with services like Meals on Wheels but in the circumstances it's somehow become our responsibility. I'm glad we can open doors for her. (John, 23/07/15)

These comments reveal a feeling that these encounters were not simply a result of post-quake insecurity, but rather the result of the earthquakes revealing the manifold excesses and voids of insecurity existing within pre-quake society.

More significantly, the revealing of these voids of insecurity did not mean that these individuals and issues would be recognised by welfare agencies. Instead, CanCERN often utilised their position as a broker, in combination with their knowledge of the welfare system, to employ strategies that ensured these individuals would be catered for. As the manager later noted, it often required an intimate knowledge of how the post-quake welfare system worked,

Sometimes you know that if I push them in the direction of Pete [a representative from the Temporary Accommodation Service]⁸⁷ that he has the capacity to make sure everything works out. Other times we have to work a bit harder...find the best way to work the system. (John, 6/08/15)

In the case of the individual in the above excerpt, CanCERN staff accompanied her to a meeting with three support agencies located within the ItK Hub, including informing her what aspects of her situation to emphasise to different agencies to ensure that she was prioritised. Such strategies characterised a significant aspect

⁸⁷ A state service that helped citizens find temporary accommodation whilst their homes were damaged, or being repaired.

of CanCERN's day-to-day activities, and represented a series of interstitial political sensibilities and practices that worked to strategically to achieve organisational aims (later explored in more depth).

The activity of CanCERN was not just limited to addressing welfare concerns that were wrapped up in broader earthquake issues. In many instances, the organisation found themselves portrayed as a new face of welfare provision in Christchurch, even though their activity was not specifically welfare orientated. In early 2011, CanCERN staff found that their website was used as a contact point for those asking for help. It seemed that some members of the public, who had been disengaged from the welfare system prior to the earthquakes, turned to CanCERN for advice on how to access support.⁸⁸ Often it appeared that individuals were coming out of the woodwork, regardless of whether their needs closely aligned with the organisation's focus on residential aspects of the recovery. In questioning a senior staff-member on this, I tried to get him to tease out exactly why people were turning to CanCERN when there appeared to be more obvious support networks available:

Simon: There seems to be a bit of a fuzzy concept of who you guys are ...I mean, I've been here a few days and I've helped people connect to WINZ [the government social welfare organisation], recommended someone join their neighbourhood group...someone even came in and asked if I knew about bowls clubs in Redcliffs...

[Laughs] We wonder about that...is it an identity crisis on our part, or is it the fact that people don't think there's anywhere else to go? Whether we like it or not, we're the face of something *different* in Christchurch. I think it comes down to the fact that what we do is different than the norm. We have a very clear set of intentions about what we want to do, that we're here to help with the residential rebuild...[another staff member in the room scoffs]...well, it's clear in my head this second, it'll change by the end of the day!

Simon: Why does there need to be a new face though?

⁸⁸ Including for addressing housing difficulties, financial assistance, legal, EQC and insurance help (not necessarily related to earthquake damage), heating issues and housing repairs, schooling, and childcare help.

Well there's politics in Christchurch...and it's a type of politics that people were starting to get sick of...I guess a type of politics that served a certain way of getting things done. What you see here...the kinds of people you're going to be engaging with day in and day out...are the kinds of people who need help and haven't had that in the past. Maybe it was because they had a problem and left the system [another staff member interjects: 'those ones, the disillusioned ones who just gave up ']. ...maybe it was because they had no idea about what options they had, you know, but now there's stories of people having a place to go, and word gets out.

Also don't forget that we're made up of residents associations. There's a depth to community there that just doesn't exist with council or CERA...or anything Gerry [the head of CERA] is involved with. The space we hold....that's going to throw up new things in itself surely. (John, Manager, 2/07/15)

It would be all too easy to regard CanCERN as evidence for an incorporated space of welfare delivery, as emphasised above through the reference to reconnecting those who 'gave up' and by the comment about how CanCERN represented a connection to the 'depth [of] community'. However what I wish to draw attention to here is that CanCERN represented a political space through which new engagements were emerging as the post-disaster landscape was reassembled. It appeared, through the presentation of people who were seeking help with non-earthquake related needs that individuals were either affirming the belief that the earthquakes had generated the capacity to do things differently or, that the presence of CanCERN enabled a kind of responsiveness that wasn't previously possible. In the conversation above, the staff member hints at the sense that the appearance of something *new* prompted the engagement of individuals who sought to test what was possible as the 'new Christchurch' was constructed (socially and politically, as well as physically). In this sense, it appeared that the re-assemblage of space post-quake involved not only organisational probing of what could be achieved through the name of the earthquake, but a similar kind of tentative inquisition by individuals.

Alternative Political Visions

The emergence of pre-quake welfare issues was also coupled with the presentation of those seeking to push alternative political visions. Early AGM notes from July 2011 note that CanCERN were actively fighting the perception that they represented a protest movement pushing for government change. As CanCERN staff noted, early meetings (in 2011-12) were often attended by individuals pushing for a type of revolutionary political change in Christchurch. Following the sacking of councillors of Environment Canterbury (the state-run, but democratically elected, environment management organisation) in 2010 (due to organisational inadequacy), there had been widespread, but discursive, disquiet about the state of governmental (both central and local) affairs in Christchurch. Much later, the large public outcry around the decision to close or merge 31 primary schools had also prompted widespread protest in Christchurch (see Carville, 2012b). Many who attended CanCERN meetings spoke of harnessing the momentum that these decisions and the earthquake had seemingly provided – arguing that CanCERN were in the best position to do this, given the knowledge of state agencies and systems they had accrued.

Pragmatically, this meant that CanCERN were often faced with questions about how they were generating opportunities for more wide-scale social and political change. For instance, on one occasion, a group of red-zone residents asked CanCERN if they were willing to front a case that sought to take central government to court over the legality of the zoning scheme in Christchurch. On another, an individual who was planning a large-scale protest, visited the ItK Hub asking if CanCERN would be involved, arguing that the organisation was best placed to speak about “how the government has failed every single one of us” (ethnographic fieldnotes, 7/05/15). During my time with the organisation I encountered individuals who approached me asking if they could contribute to the “overthrow of EQC” and to “help get rid of the bastards” [referring to CERA].

In these instances, both myself and other staff were required to rationalise how these requests did/did not fall within organisational mandates. This was clearly an ongoing issue for staff members who often spoke of having pre-rehearsed ‘spiels’ for the CanCERN mandate, one that required “...constant thinking, as we have no idea what we’re doing here” (Olivia, ethnographic fieldnotes, 28/05/15).

Most commonly, addressing these emergent political archetypes meant referring back to the perspective that the staff argued they represented – a perspective that was seemingly purposely devoid of methods. For example, on our first meeting, one of the first managers told me very directly “...our aim is to demonstrate to government organisations that community engagement has to happen differently. This can only ever be achieved jointly” (Lesley, 24/02/15). In practice, this meant adopting the approach that insurance and EQC officials were present at most CanCERN events in order to generate the impression that both community and government bodies were open in sharing information (as well as enabling dialogue). This was often a point of client conflict. For example, whilst working at the ItK Hub one day, I took a visitor out for a coffee in the mall while she waited for her appointment. In my diary notes afterwards, I noted:

Her anger (or maybe annoyance?) was palpable. She couldn't grasp why we weren't using our position to do more for people. I asked her what 'more' would look like – and she spoke about 'building a movement'. She said she had spent years trying to drum up support against the government, and that we were subsequently wasting our opportunity to do so. I pointed out that we were probably working towards a similar outcome (not a revolution but to reshape government-society relations) , and probably shared similar perspectives, but that our methods of choice might differ...her retort was that hopping into bed with government organisations would see that approach cease as soon as the recovery period was over. (ethnographic fieldnotes, 18/06/15)

The scepticism articulated by this visitor was shared by many others who engaged with CanCERN (or, subsequently refused to). During the running of the ItK Hub, members of public often would turn up to events (such as public seminars) with the intention of disrupting the sessions.⁸⁹ Much of the vitriol focused on the apparent collusion between a network that represented the community and government recovery organisations. Similar sentiment could be seen online – both in media coverage about CanCERN activity and through posts on their own website – where the organisation was vilified for 'wasting money',

⁸⁹ Some went as far as to provide pseudonym names on entry, so that they could not be traced.

‘chasing career progression’, ‘acting as dog bodies for the government’ and, on many occasions, ‘wasting the opportunity to make real change’ (see Law, 2016).

These criticisms in part reveal that the kinds of projects that were generated in the cultural and political fissures of the city post-quake were seemingly in themselves viewed as constituting the fissure. To many then, CanCERN appeared not just to represent a medium through which alternative political projects might be fostered through the rubric of residential recovery. They also represented the visceral outcome of the temporary breaking free the straightjackets of normative political procedures. Whilst this interpretation revealed CanCERN as one route of radical and critical counter-politics in Christchurch, in practice this raised an innate question for staff of whether their form of contemporary political action was in fact radical enough. Indeed, the emergence of these criticisms often prompted reflexive questioning within the organisation about the role that they played in the recovery landscape. Sitting within this questioning was a sense of unease about the possibilities they were shutting down by having a residential recovery focus. As one staff member pondered during a team meeting one day, “...who are we to judge what works and doesn’t work...what future Christchurch should and shouldn’t look like?” (Richard, 25/06/15). These reflections and concerns are drawn out in more depth in the discussions that follow.

A key concern in this section has been that particular political spaces of action were simultaneously being extended and curbed through engagements with the manifold excesses and voids of insecurity that were revealed by earthquakes. After the rupture generated by these quakes, there were some distinct signs that some place-narratives and political ways-of-doing were open to question, and that engagement with CanCERN provided one route through which allegiance to alternative possibilities might be made possible. What has only been briefly hinted to here, however, are some of the complex, contested and reflexive practices and performativities that revealed the ways in which CanCERN staff made sense of these encounters and, subsequently, defined their role in the recovery landscape. The intention in what follows is to specifically explore the ways in which CanCERN staff rationalised their existence as they probed ‘the possible’ in post-quake Christchurch. By exploring in more depth two specific initiatives – Breakthrough and the In the Know Hub – I firstly question how the earthquakes

enabled the creation of radical political forms. In so doing, I also examine how these projects were shaped through particular fidelities that sought to stay in line with the nature of potential of the earthquakes.

6.4 The Geographies of Insurance (Breakthrough)

In this section, I present cases where encounters between CanCERN staff, institutional representatives and earthquake affected citizens shaped senses of what the earthquakes represented in the narratives of the city. Previously, I drew attention to the manifold excesses and voids of insecurity that began to emerge through CanCERN. Here I shift attention to consider further how staff within the organisation demonstrated shared fidelity to the earthquakes by exploring the changing relationships between the 'public' and private market through an exploration of the Breakthrough initiative. As previously demonstrated, this initiative sought to work collaboratively with individuals and insurance companies to provide 'progress' on complex insurance claims. At first glance, this programme appears to be incorporated into the trappings of the private market landscape in Christchurch, with a direct emphasis on resolving incomplete and problematic claims for insurance companies. However, what I wish to examine in more detail are the practices of reworking in the interstitial spaces generated by the earthquakes that speak less about co-option, and rather more about an ethics of care guided by fidelity.

The practices and dealings of insurance companies after the Canterbury earthquakes have received significant media and academic attention (see Stylianou, 2015). The insurance-market response to the earthquake situation had been marked by inefficiency, antagonism and a general suspicion of the corporatism surrounding claim management strategies. These suspicions had been fuelled by critical reports on the financial risk-taking by insurance companies (Wood, Noy, & Parker, 2016), combined with cost-cutting and pressure placed on individual claimants (Meier, 2015). In addition to the ongoing insurance battles still faced by claimants at the time of writing, concerns with insurance broadly centred around three notions:

Firstly, there were fears that insurance was being used as a political and market technology to absolve institutions (including the state and private market) of responsibility in regards to the recovery efforts (Miles, 2012). Here, concerns

were being leveraged at the way in which rhetorics of insurance shifted accountability to either other organisations or to the individual. This could commonly be seen in the ways that institutions and companies responded to client enquiries. In a common theme, whilst working for CanCERN, I witnessed clients being told on the same day, “That’s not an EQC problem, you’ll have to speak to your private insurance company about that” (i.e. shifting responsibility to other organisations) or “unfortunately, your choice of insurer and policy limits what we can do...” (i.e. shifting responsibility to choices supposedly made by the individual/household prior to the earthquakes) [ethnographic fieldnotes, 8/07/15].

Secondly, there was a concern that insurance was being used as an intentional endeavour to restrict the emergence of any form of collectivity post-quake. As a manager stated to me, early in my time with the organisation, “...it’s almost impossible to form a group response because everyone’s going through different things. It’s technically a break of your contract to share your insurance circumstances with someone else...and they [insurance companies] have been threatening that” (John, ethnographic fieldnotes, 21/05/15). In utilising an approach that isolated difficulties with insurance claims and practices, there was a concern that companies were attempting to limit the opportunity for collective responses to reshape or draw attention to industry practices. Such pressure also appeared to disproportionately affect older and more vulnerable populations, many of whom initially refused to engage with CanCERN or Residential Advisory Services⁹⁰ out of fear that their insurance company would decrease their payouts.

Thirdly, many expressed fears that the earthquake situation was being leveraged by private market organisations to further entrench the pre-quake status-quo. It quickly became clear that the insured and insurers held different views about the scope of their policies in Christchurch. Policy provisions were often untested, and interpretations differed (McKay, 2013) – leading to contentions around who had the capacity/power to ‘interpret’ contracts. It later emerged that many of these issues had existed prior to 2010, however the scope of the earthquakes had publicly revealed many of the strategic financial and legislative measures

⁹⁰ A government funded, no-charge independent legal advisory service. Both government and private insurance companies were required to inform clients of this service, however this often did not occur in practice.

engaged with that were aimed at entrenching their power (Miles, 2016). As detailed throughout this thesis, insurance companies appeared to be practicing their own fidelities by attempting to establish a precedent for future extreme events.

Yet, given the contested state of affairs regarding insurance in Christchurch, there appeared to be the opening up of cracks in the landscape for emergent ethical and political routes of action. Initially, CanCERN's mandate had seen their role focus more specifically on helping individuals with government insurance claims (i.e. EQC). However, for most earthquake-affected citizens, the intricate insurance system relied on positive outcomes from both their private insurance company and the government insurance scheme in order to receive the required compensation amount to either rebuild or repair their homes.⁹¹ Given these complexities, the organisation soon found itself engaging with individuals who were experiencing issues with private insurance companies. More interestingly, it was found that insurance companies were open to adapting their methods to respond to the public backlash they had been receiving. The collapse of AMI insurance had contributed to a sense that that insurance companies were showing signs of volatility (see McCrone, 2014). In describing their relationship with Southern Response, CanCERN staff pointed towards an emergent sense of susceptibility:

It was a slow beginning...but when Southern Response knocked on our door, you got the sense that they were perhaps more aware of their limitations than you might have thought. It was almost a sign to say 'look, you [CanCERN] know things that we don't'. That in itself is a big change of attitude. I'm not suggesting that times have changed...but maybe our constant banging had registered something with them. They knew, well everyone knew, that some people had switched off, disengaged...were taking to the courts...because of the way they had been treated. I think the biggest challenge though...well, the biggest question...[large pause] was how to create something that allowed us to say what we wanted, got

⁹¹ A more in-depth explanation of the relationships between the two forms of insurance can be found at: http://www.eqc.govt.nz/sites/public_files/insurers-guide-september-2012.pdf

people involved and to also keep the insurance companies engaged without it turning into a shit fight! (Manager, 7/5/15).

Here, the manager begins to elucidate the changing relationships between private market companies and CanCERN in particular – indicating towards both an openness of engagement from insurance companies and a fractured relationship with the broader community. In response to these approaches from insurance companies there is a sense here of the shifting of energy away from traditional avenues of engagement. Prior to this, staff had spoken of the difficulties they faced in publicising insurance problems, getting information from insurance companies and subsequently supporting individual claimants regarding welfare and care opportunities – difficulties attributed to the fact that most companies did not allow either CanCERN to represent claimants or the publishing of ‘confidential’ information surrounding insurance details. However, the acknowledgement by Southern Response, in 2014, that a structured programme, through which CanCERN might operate as a kind of ‘broker’, represented a significant shift in process.

Given the apparent need for this broker-type role in Christchurch, the Breakthrough initiative was formally established in 2014. The programme initially sat within CanCERN’s organisational structure, before becoming an independent contracting body in 2015 (renamed Breakthrough Services). The programme is a ‘go-between’, where, with the permission of both individual claimant and insurance representatives, staff can access legal and technical advice related to disputed claims. Staff of the organisation do not represent the insurance company or the individual claimant, but rather act as a broker with the capacity to facilitate meetings with insurers, EQC staff and technical advisors (such as engineers) – a capacity that is not generally available to members of the public. In most instances, the first step involves meeting with the claimants to understand their perspective, or issues they are having with the insurance process (this sometimes lasts three hours). Summaries of these issues are then provided to the insurance company and a meeting is facilitated, where the highlighted concerns are worked through (attended by organisation staff). On some occasions, Breakthrough staff will also bring in representatives from a range of technical services (architects/engineers/geologists) to provide independent input into any potential issues – a process that insurance companies do not allow individual claimants to

undertake. The programme initially dealt with Southern Response claimants specifically. In 2015, in becoming an independent body, the organisation was further contracted by a range of insurance companies (including EQC, Southern Response, IAG, Lumley, Tower, and AA) on a case-by-case basis.

It is worth noting here, then, that the initiative itself points towards a co-recognition that the earthquakes demanded a different approach regarding insurance. This recognition is important here, because it shifted the conduct of CanCERN away from the mundane and discursive repetition that might mark ineffective and local political struggles, and instead lifted its practices into a world where it was given the capacity to translate, change and reshape the institutions that it encountered. The identification, by both institutional and private market bodies, of a world that is seemingly now unstable and of an community form that might help them move towards stability, is inherently powerful as it enabled CanCERN to formally partake in the enactment of alternative possibilities – one that saw them move away from ‘just another advocacy group’. However, it also simultaneously raised questions about potential co-option into the practices and rationalities of private market organisations. With the purpose of this section having been to introduce the kinds of co-recognitions that emerged as a result of the earthquakes in Christchurch, I now wish to shift attention to the idea of fidelity. In doing so, I aim to more specifically examine how CanCERN’s sought to make sense of the event amid criticisms and questions of private market complicity.

Organisational Logics

In the previous section, I sought to illustrate how the Breakthrough initiative was born out of a co-recognition that the earthquakes in Christchurch demanded a different approach to settling insurance claims. The establishment of this initiative raises immediate questions as to how the frontline performance of care might be influenced by the tenets of private market practices and orthodoxies. Within the ‘insider’ contractual arena of neoliberal governance, these spaces of care and advocacy are often framed as potential sites of co-option or subversion (Barnes & Prior, 2009). More specifically, whereas incursions by the private sector into networks of service, care and ‘community’ seem to insinuate a ‘for-profit’ minimalisation of roles, the active presence of non-profit agencies in private market affairs is generally attributed to an opportunity to mount a significant

challenge to neoliberal and institutional logics (Jamoul & Wills, 2008). Normatively, however, third-sector organisations that have become drawn into financial and regulatory networks of hegemonic governance are also assumed to undergo total ideological, ethical, and institutional isomorphism (Wolch, 1990). This section seeks to unpick these debates in relation to Breakthrough.

In the instance of Breakthrough, there appeared to be another set of logics at work that cut against established private market-society relations. These spoke less about under-hand or publicised subversion and something more about engagement with a phenomenology of need that sought to simultaneously reshape both personal and collective territories. The new energies that were being placed into the Breakthrough initiative were focused more upon how particular relations and procedures might be altered and mediated through the rubric of the earthquakes, rather than potentially fostering spaces of resistance against the private market. Operationally, for CanCERN, this required reflexive thinking about how the initiative might demonstrate fidelity to the spaces that had opened up post-quake without simply reaffirming the status-quo relations between society and the private market:

It's not the case of sticking the middle finger up at them [the insurance companies] and saying screw you...what's that going to achieve? But then again...it's not about taking what Southern Response give us and saying to the claimants 'this is how it is'...what's that going to achieve? There's something in the middle there...facilitating things but at the exact same time highlighting that things have to be differently. A kind of learning through doing...learning both for the insurance companies and for us, not to be doing it all wrong like usual [laughs]. (John, Manager, 10/08/15)

CanCERN's intention here was not to push for change 'under the radar', as it were, but to rather shape relationships more directly. The 'learnings' that John draws attention to is a clear indication that the organisation were seeking to redress relations on a broader level by drawing attention to the limitations of current practice. On some occasions, this saw CanCERN adopt a method through which they went above and beyond the remit of the Breakthrough programme. This included anecdotally communicating with insurance staff about processual issues they believed were causing issues. On others, it saw staff

refuse to facilitate particular meetings because the conditions set by insurance companies were not seen as satisfactory (for example, they may not have supplied reasonable evidence of thorough engineering reports). Although these occasions might be considered 'mundane resistances', there was a direct attempt here to manage (or carve out) space through which relations and formations might be re-worked more effectively. The focus was not on simply 'getting by' in the space afforded by the insurance companies, so much as working strategically to create precedents for how relations would play out both in the context of the project and in future.

Despite the emergent ability to contribute to new logics, practices and relations, CanCERN faced widespread criticism for the initiative in the early days. Staff often struggled to convince individual claimants of the value of the project. Whilst many were content to engage with the initiative to explore what options they had to challenge legal decisions, staff found that many were unwilling to formally enter the Breakthrough programme itself. Sometimes claimants were unwilling to partake in any relationship with their insurance company (as this was viewed as being complicit in their management of earthquake claims). More commonly claimants exhibited a fear or suspicion that CanCERN would be forced to use their position to work against the claimant. Potential users of the service were often wary of utilising a programme which publically stated that they were contracted by insurance companies to help process claims. Even some service-users, who reported positive experiences, were unsure of the relationships that enabled the project. In one instance, I encountered an individual who had settled their Southern Response claim through Breakthrough, who stated:

It was great. Excellent. So helpful. They gave me the information that I needed to hear. It was a bit odd, having everything translated by one of you guys [referring to CanCERN staff]...I'm not actually sure who you guys are more interested in working for, them [the insurance company] or me! [laughs] (ethnographic fieldnotes, 23/06/15).

Embedded within this feedback was an apparent uneasiness as to what ends the closure of her claim was meeting. The comment hints at a confusion over whom and what CanCERN were representing, or standing for, in the recovery landscape. Further conversation revealed an innate concern that the closure of

her claim might have legitimised the tactics previously engaged with by the insurance company.

Interestingly, the concern of private market co-option was one that was shared both by potential users and the organisation itself, albeit from different perspectives. In addition to the earlier statement of “learning through” what was possible through Breakthrough, a manager discussed the rationale for being so ‘open’ about being pulled into insurance dealings:

You might argue we’re a tool for them, sure. At some times, I’m sure we are...we’ve made some massive mistakes, played into their hand a bit, but I think we’re learning from those. There’s always going to be instances where you just say ‘fuck it, the bigger picture isn’t worth it here, let’s just get what we can for these people’. That’s the reality.

But they [insurance companies] might have tried every other option, and they’re down to the last few people...and they need to get their claims closed down, get the numbers looking right. But look at it this way...if they can recognise the value of us...that we can do something they couldn’t dream of doing in a million years, what power does that gives us? I think it puts us in a unique position...where we have the ability to not only say ‘this is why you’re not making progress with these people, in this instance’ but to also strongly say ‘this isn’t right. It has to change’ (Olivia, 23/07/15).

In addition to detailing the process through which individual claimants’ experiences could be used to shape the conduct of insurance companies, the manager draws attention to how the initiative almost certainly served institutional goals. Despite remaining loyal to the notion that the space existed through which alternative logics could be deployed, there was an acceptance that the apparent fragility of power post-quake did not automatically equate to procedural and institutional change. Rather, it was fragility (which manifested in the forms of receptiveness to community involvement) that enabled a process of performatively probing what alternatives and performances were possible in different circumstances.

The manager later commented that ‘playing into their hands’ generally occurred for one of two reasons. In some instances, staff realised that they could have

pushed further and consequently 'learnt' from their mistakes and, in others, staff realised (as in the above excerpt) that the space did not exist to push for anything more than settling an individual claim. This notion of learning through the spaces opened up by the Breakthrough initiative could be regarded as the opening out of ethical spaces of encounter which create possibilities for new identifications and, more importantly, new understandings of what was possible post-quake. In this way, learning not only included developing the skills through which more beneficial and effective outcomes are met for the individual claimant, but also the development of knowledge about the various intensities that made up the landscape. This notion of learning what was possible was also touched upon by another staff member:

Breakthrough is about facilitation, yeah, of course...what do you need to facilitate, though? You have to, *you have to* [stresses words], figure out what everyone in the room is looking to achieve and what they're capable of doing. On top of the whole translating technical jargon, that's what I have to do...I need to recognise what levers need to be pulled to make change. That's the trial and error bit. (Olivia, 23/07/15)

Hinted at here (and in the previous excerpt) are the difficulties faced in discovering the possibilities and limitations of the Breakthrough initiative. These comments reveal an understanding that sustaining post-quake creative activities did not solely mean the generation of 'noncompliant' spaces, but rather involved incomplete performances, failed experiments and varying degrees of inculcation into institutional settings. In many instances, this included an acceptance that individual client welfare might come at the expense of radical and alternative action. In some instances, then, it would be easy to write off the organisation as being guided by an ethics of care that became subsumed into institutional modes of operation. In others, the organisations could be labelled as pursuing a confrontational, prefigurative opposition to institutional apparatuses. However, neither of these claims address the performative probings and experimentations undertaken by the organisation in order to both, bring attention to the perceived injustices of the conduct of insurance companies post-quake and, reshape private market-society relations on a broader level.

Organisational Experimentation

In the instance of the Breakthrough initiative, faithfulness to the nature of the earthquakes might be observed as something more nuanced than a moral or ethical imperative to enact change. On one level, there was a certain sort of commitment exhibited by CanCERN and relevant institutions in co-recognising that the earthquakes prompted a rupture through which a new status-quo could be constructed. In this way, the commitment to build and implement new kinds of political and organisational forms emerged through a faithfulness to the nature and potential of the earthquakes. In this instance, the earthquake event is continued – fuelled by emergent subjectivities that reflect an ongoing fidelity to the possibility of working through insurance claims in a different way. Here, the Breakthrough initiative does not simply represent an opportunity to provide a form of care to those with problematic claims, but also provides a platform through which dominant ideologies and practices of an albeit complex and multidimensional conservative Christchurch could be challenged.

Pragmatically, staff often spoke of Breakthrough as representing progress both because it enabled people to move forward with their claims and because it represented, visibly, a departure of insurance status-quo. Significant attention was put into the project precisely because it was seen as a way of ensuring that the opportunities that arose post-quake would not close down. The day-to-day organisation of the initiative, and the extent to which their role extended to, however, unfolded in a way that staff often couldn't describe a sense of how the initiative was contributing to the recovery landscape.

It appeared, from my observations, the experimentation associated with this emergent initiative was as much about remaining receptive to the ways in which spaces opened and closed as it was about entrenching its existence in the city. For example, in one instance a staff member rationalised Breakthrough as the outcome of "...trying to figure out which buttons can be pushed so that we can make the best possible progress" (John, ethnographic fieldnotes, 6/07/15). A week later, the same staff member commented that the initiative was taking a "...back-seat and it might be on its last legs." (ethnographic fieldnotes, 9/10/15). In a meeting almost two years after the beginning of the programme, and after the opening of Breakthrough Services, another staff member stated, "little did we

know that this would become the rock, the centre of our efforts” (Olivia, ethnographic fieldnotes, 21/01/17). Remaining ‘faithful’ to the earthquakes, in some sense then, appeared to be about remaining receptive to the idea that the recovery landscape was marked by rapidly opening and closing spaces of opportunity.

In this vein, and perhaps just as significantly, the negotiations, the ‘gives’ and ‘takes’ and the openness to forms of organisational, procedural and ethical experimentation reveal processes of realising the nature of the disaster in Christchurch. The Breakthrough initiative, alone, demonstrated a recognition from CanCERN that the earthquakes had ruptured the city in numerous and unforeseen ways. Activity, in these instances, appeared to be less about faithfulness to change-as-radical-rupture and rather more about engaging the rubric of the earthquakes to probe the possible presents and futures that might be actualised through the initiative.

Faithfulness to the interruption of the status-quo was still observable in the failures, the ‘push-backs’ and the “stop signs” (as one staff member, below, put it) because staff were entwined within a complex and messy process of discovering the possibilities engendered by the earthquake event. In a theme that runs through both this and the following chapter, staff generally considered that the earthquakes ruptured the possibility for some things to occur and, whilst “...the government recovery has made it clear we need to get them to right some wrongs” organisational endeavour was largely about probing “...what all this rumbling underneath us has actually shaken in the insurance system” (Lesley, 24/02/15). Subsequently, significant organisational endeavour in the project focused on figuring out whether “...something not working is actually a stop sign or a sign that we just need to push it further, from a different angle” (Olivia, 23/07/15).

In what follows, I wish to develop further the idea that CanCERN’s activities were shaped by performative probings of the recovery landscape. In shifting attention to another CanCERN initiative – the In the Know Hub – the following section picks up on themes and practices of post-quake experimentation and examines the material spaces through which fidelity to the earthquakes could be observed. In particular, I move to unpick the practices and rationalities through which

CanCERN activity sought to embed practices that aligned with the perceived nature of the earthquakes in Christchurch.

6.5 Performative Spaces of Fidelity (In the Know Hub)

If the previous section raised questions about whether fidelity might be conceived as a faithfulness to probing what can be achieved through the rubric of the earthquakes, I also wish to present cases where encounters between CanCERN staff and earthquake-affected citizens were shaped through particular material constructions of space post-quake. The focus here is on the In the Know Hub, where the issue here concerns the kinds of emergent political spaces that might be associated with the rupture generated by the earthquakes.

In many ways, the ‘rupture’ I have spoken about has been largely intangible to this point. However, here I shift the attention to a distinctly material space through which a probing of alternative forms of politics was made possible – what became a contentious space of social and political experimentation in Christchurch. In what follows I wish to explore the strategic reworkings and organisational practices that led to the Hub space, as well as the ways that fidelity might be observed as emanating from engagements within the ItK Hub itself. Focus here is both on organisational practices and the experiences of service users.

Emergent Earthquake Spaces

The rationale behind the ItK Hub was to generate a space through which government recovery agencies, community organisations and private market companies (namely, insurance) were simultaneously housed. The initiative built upon previous spaces that had been established in different suburbs of Christchurch, which had been run by EQR (the Fletchers Construction/EQC project-management organisation). Many of these projects were of limited success however, given that distrust of EQR staff by members of the public meant that Hubs were generally not viewed as accessible.⁹² As a result, CanCERN and representatives from CERA jointly planned an initiative that would address on-going concerns for both organisations. For CERA, this appeared to be driven by an increasing disconnect from individual and community recovery (see The

⁹² For example, it was difficult to walk-up and speak to an EQR representative. Visitors required appointments, and the Hubs therefore appeared to be the ‘status-quo’ system, albeit located in different suburbs.

Press, 2012), and a sense that “90% of people had been dealt with, but the other 10% are increasingly difficult to access” (Manager, 16/03/15). For CanCERN, these concerns were based around the ongoing lack of community consultation in the recovery process and the lack of accessibility to, and transparency of, the state post-quake.

Subsequently, the Hub was designed as a micro-space where staff from a range of recovery orientated organisations participated in cross-over practices of care and representation, albeit from distinctly different rationales and positions. The intention here was that the Hub space would permit collaboration and public engagement through the visible and processual accessibility of recovery staff and as a part of a recovery initiative that was openly fronted by CanCERN staff.⁹³ The outcome of this, from CanCERN’s perspective, not only represented a public space through which ‘othered’ earthquake subjects might be recognised, but also a method through which different performances and practices of recovery might be revealed – subsequently generating a collective rejection of the status-quo urban politics in Christchurch. Figures 15 and 16 show the Hub soon after it’s opening.



Figure 15: A shot from the entrance of the ItK Hub soon after it opened. At the far end of the room are two 'cubby holes' where EQC staff were situated. Welfare services were located on the left of the room (some in shot).

⁹³ As detailed in Chapter Four (with the reflection on my role as a ‘community host’), and throughout this section, the entrance of this space was fronted and designed by CanCERN – ensuring that the first contact point was with a community representative.



Figure 16: The reception area of the Hub, which was manned by CanCERN Community Hosts (including myself). As detailed later, this area soon radically changed in order to make the space feel less institutional, and was replaced by high-tables, beanbags and brightly coloured wall material.

In many ways, the Hub represented the outcome of an ongoing commitment to the notion that the earthquakes would result in more visible forms of change. With the planning of the earthquake Hub under way, staff spoke of a distinct sense that their previous efforts had cumulated in the recognition that there was a need for new kinds of political procedures and engagements in the recovery efforts. Importantly for the organisation, the Hub represented a political experiment that was both decentralised (in that it took government and private organisations ‘outside’ of their spheres) whilst maintaining some kind of bounded discipline that was seen as necessary for collective community action (countering the discursive kinds of community disquiet that had existed prior to the quakes). In the lead up to the opening, staff spoke of “...finally having the opportunity to show people what [we’re] about” (Ethnographic journal, 11/4/15). As one staff member stated:

It’s been a bit like banging our heads against the same wall repeatedly...but something like the Hub has long been needed and it serves as justification for what we already knew...that the earthquakes have revealed that not everything can be swept under the carpet and that the wisdom of the community has a place amongst the supposed knowledge of the experts (email communication, 9/5/15).

Given the perception that the Hub emerged out of previous practices, staff conveyed a strong sense of ownership over the initiative. During the planning phases, senior staff spoke of the need to adhere to their initial organisational mandate of representing the perspective of earthquake-affected populations – an adherence that often required negotiating and contesting governmental expectations of the intention of the Hub. It appeared, unlike the Breakthrough initiative where staff were content to forgo practices that didn't yield to organisational pressure, staff had a clearer image of how the Hub fitted into the post-quake landscape. Despite this, I often encountered staff returning from meetings with CERA officials, in which bitter disappointment was expressed at the ways governmental staff viewed the Hub as “just another way of getting at the hard-to-reach members of the public” (Ethnographic journal, 16/4/15).

In response, staff often deployed a range of tactics that sought to ensure that the initiative reflected its perceived progressive potential. This ranged from employing the position of ‘community voice’ to mobilise public dissent (for example, the publishing of content on the CanCERN website highlighting the ‘roadblocks’ put in place by the state) to the strategic engagement of particular connections within recovery agencies. As a manager stated, referring to the knowledges they had developed during earlier relationships with recovery agencies, “...sometimes it's just a case of pulling the strings and speaking to someone you know sees things from our perspective” (John, ethnographic fieldnotes, 24/03/15). Most commonly, CanCERN negotiated the deliberate preservation of responsibility by ensuring that the organisation held control over specific aspects of the Hub's design and running.

Despite the initiative being framed by all as a shift in the urban politics of Christchurch, these tactics were rationalised by staff who communicated that the presence of the Hub did not mean “everything all of a sudden happens easily now” (John, 23/04/15). Rather, there was an acknowledgement that the earthquakes had provided the capacity “...for us to contest how things are managed and run...with everyone knowing that we now have something to stand on [referring to CERA and EQC's acknowledgement of their limitations]” (ibid). In this instance, the ‘now’ referred to how the present initiative was shaped by previous practices of the organisation to reveal the insecurities revealed by the earthquakes.

These tactics were deployed with an acknowledgement that the organisation was seeking to contribute to a space that could only exist through the auspices of state collaboration. This didn't mean that working inside the trappings of a governmental framework was considered as diluting or erasing organisational identity, however (see Newman et al., 2004). In contrast, staff spoke of being selective in how they engaged and challenged governmental rationalities, procedures and imaginations. Commonly, this revolved around protocols that made it more difficult for members of the public to communicate with state representatives. For example, early in the planning process, EQC refused to partake in the Hub unless members of the public had their details recorded by CanCERN staff and a 'pass-over' was performed between organisations. Whilst this appears mundane, it both removed the notion that the state was accessible (and created the impression that it was really business as usual – *please take a seat and wait for EQC to come and see you*) and simultaneously generated the impression that CanCERN were performing the role of dutiful gatekeeper (*You want to see someone from EQC? Well the only way to do that is through me...what's your name and address?*).

Despite this, in the early stages of the Hub itself, organisational staff were reluctant to challenge this system – acknowledging that, despite a clearer vision of to what political and ethical ends the Hub should serve⁹⁴, not all institutional processes could be confronted. Take the following related example, which is an excerpt from my ethnographic journal from during the 'planning stages' of the Hub:

John [pseudonym, Manager] walked into the training session and sat down with a sigh. Rubbing his hands over his eyes, he tells the room (5 of us) that EQC only want to have staff there at certain times and on certain days, and only those with pre-arranged appointments can see them. 'But that goes against this whole project...the whole reason for doing this!' someone exclaimed angrily.

Discussion goes on for a few minutes – mainly focusing on how they might voice their concerns to EQC. John ends the conversation by saying that we should get back to the task at hand, and the admission that 'our hands

⁹⁴ More so than with the Breakthrough initiative, detailed in the last section, anyway.

might be tied with this one. I'm going to push as much as I can, but if that doesn't work then we'll make the ground up somewhere else...there'll be an alternative somewhere there' (Ethnographic journal, 6/3/15)

In this instance, John appeared to be resigned to the fact that a significant aim of the Hub might be lost to state bureaucratic procedures. His comments, nonetheless, were not paired with an air of desperation, but rather the belief that CanCERN's position gave them both the capacity to push and probe for alternatives or, at the very least, look for alternatives elsewhere. Remaining faithful to the earthquakes, in this case, was not about the forceful conversion of EQC representatives to similar understandings of the rupture. Instead, it appeared to be more about the acknowledgement that spaces would open up for opportunities for change to reveal itself in other ways to the organisation. Enacting an alternative politics of possibility then, at this point, might be conceived as being less about spatial and performative separation from government schemes and technologies, and more about the capacity to recognise and subsequently rework fissures in institutional rationalities (see also Williams, Goodwin, & Cloke, 2014).

Strategic Practices

Given both a strong belief of what ends the Hub should serve and the necessity to work within governmental trappings, CanCERN often employed a range of tactics to performatively influence, resist and re-work the performative assemblages of the institutions involved in the initiative. Most notably, effort was given to ensuring that the organisation had control over how the space was aesthetically designed. For staff, the Hub represented a vision of how the 'new' Christchurch might operate. Wrapped up in this were discourses of emergent accountability and visibility – in respect to government and the private market, who were accused of hiding behind earthquake legislation (see Provost, 2017). As such, CanCERN were adamant in their push for a space that didn't *look like* the previous state-controlled residential hubs, and instead embodied the idea that social-state relations had shifted. To achieve this, however, meant working against institutions who were attempting to enact their own fidelities to the earthquakes.

A common tactic employed by the organisation was to rationalise the construction of the Hub through 'government speak', so that movements away from the status-quo fitted within institutional rationalities:

We told them right from the outset, 'if you want to have people visit this thing, you need to craft it as a community space, not a government one'...It can't have the appearance of just another government space...something akin to a WINZ [the state social welfare department] building. At the end of the day it's a numbers game for them, so that seemed to strike a chord.

The idea is that the Hub is a space that looks welcoming. People should be able to walk past and feel as though it's a space that's inviting them in. That's part of the remit...somewhere with comfy chairs, information boards, brighter colours, beanbags even...boards that having upcoming talks and seminars...something which people felt like welcomed them in. It needs to embody what Christchurch has been missing...openness, communication...a spot that parades its collectivity. [CanCERN staff member, 21/4/15]

In describing a sense of alterity, the staff member pointed to more than a space that was simply welcoming, and instead begins to touch on the aesthetic characteristics that might reflect institutional and bureaucratic change in Christchurch. Importantly, the rationalising and framing of the space through 'governmental speak' reflected an important strategy to ensure that the Hub fitted within CanCERN's vision for post-quake change. In this instance, it was not simply the presence of the space that fostered or enabled inclusion, but that the materiality of it reflected a shift in control enabled by the earthquakes. This focus on space was furthered later in the same conversation:

People should be able to see who is there. The design is that so that you [referring to myself as a CanCERN staff member] are situated near the front so that the first person that visitors engage with is somebody from a community organisation. But what's most important is that the staff from other organisations can be seen. It's designed so that it's an open space. If you need to point someone in the direction of an EQC person, they can see who you're pointing to...it's about putting a face to faceless organisations. Naturally there's private spaces for more in-depth

appointments and the like...but we want to create the feeling that you can go and ask for information and help, as well as see people from different organisations and walks of life actually communicating with one another. Breaking down those ol' silo walls, you know. [CanCERN staff member, 21/4/15].

In talking about fostering a sense of what 'Christchurch has been missing', the staff member describes the creation of a regulated space that sought to prompt specific kinds of encounters. For CanCERN, the aesthetics of the space mattered as it represented a site through which the insecurity of pre-quake life could be acknowledged post-quake. In order to achieve this, having a spatial presence itself was not enough to encourage the emergence of new subjects and subjectivities, rather it also needed to give the appearance that the Hub represented change.

Contrary to much of the social movement literature, which focus inherently on the *occupation of space* (Butler, 2011; Dean, 2011), this case study points towards the deliberate and strategic assemblage of space through which alternative politics and possibilities might be performatively enacted and enabled. Interestingly, EQC had initially pushed back against CanCERN's proposal for an 'open space', which resulted in CanCERN threatening to walk away from the project. In this instance, the organisation demonstrated a conscious understanding of the position that they held – knowing that without their involvement the Hub would not go ahead – and were thus willing to leverage their influence to design a political space that was seen as *in line* with the situation in Christchurch. The challenge here, from CanCERN's perspective, was to shape a space that did not simply draw in participants who were focused on working through residential recovery issues (although this was a project aim). Rather, it was an attempt to instigate a transition towards the emergence of new urban politics and governance in Christchurch. As such, in what follows I wish to shift attention to interactions between visitors and staff in the Hub itself in order to explore the influence of material space on individual and collective subjectivities.

Contested Fidelities

If the ItK Hub emerged from perceived faithfulness to the potential of the earthquakes – performances that were wrapped up in practices of 'giving' and

‘taking’ with other actors each with their own fidelities – a subsequent series of questions is raised about how these negotiations shaped the experiences and subjectivities of service users. Whilst significant attention has explored the ethical and political spaces in which various forms of interstitial politics of resistance and experimentation have sprung up (Featherstone et al., 2012; Williams et al., 2014), less work has sought to examine the kinds of subjectivities that organisations working within these spaces might shape. Even within event literature, which is at pains to acknowledge the importance of spatial re-assemblage for the production of new and collective subjectivities, the processes whereby ‘subjects of the event’ are formed are scarcely considered (Bassett, 2016). Indeed, significant criticism has been levelled at Badiou for the obscurity through which he philosophises how individuals recognise a rupture or event – with the ‘affective landscape of the individual’ seemingly rendered irrelevant (O’Sullivan, 2012). As such, the question remains as to what kinds of processes and mediations might be at play for subjects to recognise the possibility of radically different futures and how TSOs might be involved in this.

In this instance, encounters with clients in the Hub pointed towards complex subjectivities, discursive positionalities and contested fidelities. Despite the Hub representing a visual departure from the political status-quo in Christchurch, the initiative quickly became a space of contention in the recovery environment. Whilst, for CanCERN, the material space of the Hub offered the opportunity to both address earthquake related welfare issues and to performatively re-work the regressive nature of government technologies, for many the Hub was viewed as a “new face on the same broken system” (Hub visitor, 2/07/15). Despite some initial success in addressing post-quake welfare issues, the Hub struggled to shake the impression that it was inherently a government-backed initiative. Even in my attempts to make sense of the space in the early stages, I noted an intimidating and institutional atmosphere:

Walking in, there are 3 information stands on the right with residential recovery material (mostly MBIE⁹⁵), next to three high tables with stools – similar to what you would find in a bar. On the left is a desk that undeniably looks like a reception of some sort. There’s two smartly dressed security

⁹⁵ Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (the government department focused on building economic productivity)

guards standing behind it. The fact that the desk is at the front means that I'm drawn to it. It feels like the place I'm 'supposed' to start.

Beyond the entranceway there are desks scattered around the walls of the room, with brightly coloured banners pointing out what agency the desk belongs to. They're all facing the front though, so it feels as though there are eyes on you as soon as you step in. There's some tables and seats in the middle of the room – an obvious waiting area designed to pull you further into the space...

It looks modern and busy. But it just feels too structured, too efficient. I feel like I need permission to go beyond the reception area. There's an overwhelming feeling that I'm waiting to be processed to enter into the lion's den...the bleached white walls don't really help (Ethnographic journal, 13/5/15).

In many ways, my feelings of a kind of institutional order in the space were reflected by early visitors. Many of these either did not know who CanCERN were, presumed that CanCERN had 'gotten into bed' with government recovery efforts, or were unhappy that the Hub appeared a replication of previous recovery projects. In a situation reflective of many encounters, I was faced one day by an angry, older male who laughed in my face when I told him I was a 'Community Host' (as per my training). "You're just a government lackey" he scoffed at me, "how much are they paying you to be here? Probably less than you're worth to them [referring to CERA/EQC] anyway" (ethnographic fieldnotes, 11/06/15). In another instance, another staff member, who was a well-known figure in the post-quake political environment, was questioned, "What are you doing here? Three weeks ago you were telling me that you had been shafted by EQC, and now you're working for them?" (ethnographic fieldnotes, 18/06/15). Both of these comments revealed an unease at the emergence of a joint state-CanCERN initiative that, on the face of it, appeared to counter the public pressure the organisation had been putting on state recovery efforts previously. On the latter occasion, the staff member's understanding of what the earthquakes demanded (explained then as "we know we need to build a political system where I can communicate my difficulties and have them worked through face-to-face" [Olivia, ethnographic fieldnotes, 23/04/15]) differed from the visitor's assertion that the

earthquakes required a breaking free from a reliance on the state for recovery. On the face of it, then, this relationship (including the presence of vocal 'community' figures) furthered the notion that the Hub served to mop up the gaps left by a political infrastructure that was seeking to restore the status-quo.

Criticism was also levelled at 'business-like' procedures within the Hub, especially the hand-over of visitors to government staff. Our training had instructed us to have in-depth conversations with visitors to ascertain their needs and the best route through which they might be supported, before walking them to the appropriate staff member and introducing them to one another. In one case, the visitor turned around and said to me, "have I just wasted 15 minutes talking to you...you're just sending me back to the very people I've been having trouble with? This is pathetic" (ethnographic fieldnotes, 7/04/15). Echoing the same notion that the CanCERN involvement just added a layer of procedure, another client asked me, "Won't you stay with me while I meet her [a EQC staff member]? If I had known you were just setting me up with an appointment I could have called on the phone..." (ethnographic fieldnotes, 14/04/15). I later noted in my field diary that the clients look to me "was a mixture of confusion and exasperation, like 'why have you put me through this?'"

In this instance, my role did not allow me to sit in on the appointment, as CanCERN's rationale was to enable the connection, not to influence it. As such, whilst project co-ordinators were content with the number of people visiting the Hub space, and that the outcome of many of the interactions was extremely positive (a number of long-standing insurance and welfare issues were addressed), organisation staff voiced a concern that people were being put off because of a conceived selling-out to government. In this way, some visitors expressed the notion that engagement with a CanCERN driven initiative implied tacit consent/acceptance of the government recovery programme – a discourse that was unlikely to affect those most obviously requiring welfare, but one which hindered any engagement with individuals/community groups wanting to contribute to a 'new' Christchurch. Consequently, the value of the Hub (in these early stages) was seen not as a space through which staff and co-clients co-ventured into the production of alternative senses of sociality, but rather as a more publicised and better connected earthquake recovery tool.

The question here, for CanCERN staff, was whether this was enough. Certainly, the Hub was demonstrating a method which meant previously excluded issues gained visibility and traction. Initial feedback by those who had been connected to welfare services through the initiative spoke of positively partaking in a project that was ‘people centric’. However, it appeared to come at the expense of a bigger vision. Engagements with the organisation were discursive – with no sense of a collective claim on the event or unity emerging – and the fact that CanCERN fronted the initiative had led to many members of the public assuming that the space had closed down for alternative kinds of politics to emerge.⁹⁶ It appeared as though that the earthquakes had generated spaces through which particular alternative practices of care might be enacted but the fear, for the organisation, was that without the emergence of a collective understanding of what the earthquakes marked in the city might struggle to emerge.

In response, the organisation sought to leverage its community ties to probe and shape broader discourses of what the ItK Hub stood for. Initially this involved expanding the scope beyond the residential recovery framing. Other staff who were employed as Community Hosts by CanCERN, who were generally embedded within other community, residential and advocacy networks, were utilised to spread word about the Hub – with careful framing of the Hub’s intention. Instead of operating as a space for ‘residential recovery information’, the Hub became stylised as a place to ‘come and ask questions’. This reframing not only shifted direction specifically away from the residential recovery focus (although this remained at the heart of day-to-day activity), but sought to propagate the notion that the Hub space represented an area where information could be found and, more importantly, systems and knowledge could be questioned.

This shift generally rolled-out in quite mundane ways. For example, in one strategy meeting, a Community Host commented that, when speaking to people in other community networks, he now invited people to the Hub instead of trying to offer support himself – “I say to them now, ‘you know what, that would be a great issue to explore with one of the EQC reps in the Hub’. It’s not my responsibility to rationalise their [state] decisions now” (Richard, ethnographic fieldnotes, 23/07/15). Echoing this, another Host commented, “Yeah, now I just

⁹⁶ See the comments section of Law, 2016 – where the organisation is criticised for selling out of their initial mandate.

tell people, 'look, the space is there for you to find out and question how things are happening. Go and do it'" (Caroline, ethnographic fieldnotes, 23/07/15). In this instance, discussion centred around how organisational contacts might further the understanding that the Hub did not just exist as a space of care, but existed as the opportunity to partake in a new kind of citizenship where institutions were accountable in other ways. This, however, was attached with a warning. As a manager stated during a team meeting, "Lets make sure we're not going to give off the appearance that people can just turn up looking for a fight and find one...instead maybe let's have a goal where everyone leaves with more clarity than they turned up with...stress that this is a place that they have a voice" (John, ethnographic fieldnotes, 23/07/15).

Nevertheless, this re-framing raised concerns around exactly what CanCERN's role in the community was – raising internal questions of how they might be mediating/influencing engagement. The process of drawing upon community connections to generate engagement with the project revealed an inherent sort of representation. Despite the contention that CanCERN stood for a perspective, their actions were aligned with representing perspectives that were assumed to be the domain of the community. In turn, this rationale sees their claims about 'representing a perspective' as much constituting community as reflecting it. In this case, to represent the perspective of community was to hold a position that configured particular possibilities of action, whilst occluding others. In this vein, being 'guided by faithfulness' was to assume a role both as a mediator and as a corporate actor with a perceived authenticity, authority and legitimacy over what constituted the common good for community. Subsequently this formed a sort of clearing house for developing, disseminating and refining performances of fidelity, but simultaneously stimulated the emergence of a space of contention in which alternative experiences and visions competed in ongoing disputes about how urban politics might play out.

This is not to suggest that the inherent representation involved in 'speaking for and through' affected individuals and communities was paired with practices of silencing and exclusion. On the contrary, the process through which CanCERN engaged affected individuals was as much an invitation – an opening up of a scene of claims and counter-claims through which individual performances of fidelity became both possible and public. But, and as acknowledged by the

organisation, this required a process of discursively considering who and what they represented. In this case, 'representing the perspective of community' often meant, in practice, representing complex, conflicting and, sometimes, deeply institutionalised issues (often issues that had already received state attention prior to the earthquakes). When I put the question of representation to John, the Hub manager, he responded,

It's one of the hardest things to practically and logistically manage...As much as we don't like it, we're the doorkeeper of sorts here...figuring out the best routes to help...deciding what issues we escalate...*but I think the hardest thing to contend with is that we're essentially working for people who might not actually want help* [emphasis added], or things to be done in a certain way. That's the nature of the beast with this recovery...there's no chance for a collective recovery because the system is orientated towards recovery being an individual process. So, when we're trying to put forward the perspective of people who have moved already, we're going to be accused of ignoring those still stuck...when we represent the experiences of those stuck in insurance nightmares, others will accuse us ignoring the ones who took the legal route out...if we're pushing for EQC or the council to formally recognise issues around flood plain housing repairs, there's someone out there shouting we're damaging progress they've made on another path.

If we feedback the idea that we've positively influenced the recovery in a certain way, some will inevitably, and already do, accuse us of taking community away from them...or maybe in a direction they didn't want it to go. That's the thing...same end goal perhaps, different vision of how we might actually get there (John, 18/7/15).

John points towards the stretched-out, complex networks of issues that were wrapped up in conceptualisations of 'community' post-quake. Even though the Hub space manifested as a sort of gathering place where issues and fidelities became public, the discourse of a community-fronted space saw the organisation adopting discursive positionalities alongside, within and against 'community' at various stages. As John alludes to, even though CanCERN sought to represent the experiences of earthquake affected citizens more broadly, this required

cultivating attention towards specific interests – a process which saw a blurring of the ‘personal’ and the ‘mass’ in order to prompt institutional recognition and response (see Pykett, 2010). The focus here may have been on the individual having the capacity to be recognised by the system (making progress with their insurance claim or issue), but also for institutional systems to recognise that they were also part of a broader collective unity. Most importantly, the key here, for CanCERN, was to build a particular representation of a public that further constructed a sense of disenfranchisement post-quake. This often saw the organisation representing perspectives that were also playing-out elsewhere in the Christchurch recovery environment. This duplicity contributed to community conflict, particularly given their embeddedness within the institutional setting, a theme which is illustrated in John’s reference to ‘same end goal[s], different vision of how we might actually get there’.⁹⁷

As I have sought to discuss in this focused section, whilst the Hub represented a space of political and social experimentation that sought to reveal the inefficiencies, incompleteness and excessiveness of life under existing political regimes, it also represented a space of contention. These contestations emerged particularly as subjects came together who were realising, enacting and negotiating their own fidelities in relation to the earthquakes. In what follows, in the final section of this chapter, I shift attention to the closure of the organisation and explore how fidelity might be observed through CanCERN’s rationale for ceasing activity.

6.6 Narratives of Closure

In late 2015, CanCERN ceased operations. This move followed the closure of the ItK Hub and the de-establishment of CERA (who, in early 2016, handed over recovery responsibilities to a range of existing state departments). The decision to cease existence, however, was not one that had been determined in advance but had been guided by a sense that CanCERN’s role in the recovery “...has been questioned by everyone to a point where we can no longer clearly answer what we’re doing, or how to go about it” (Manager, 13/08/15). As I previously explored, CanCERN were guided by a sagacity that the earthquake situation

⁹⁷ More detail around these conflicts can be seen in the organisation’s final newsletter, *The Spaces of Discomfort*: <http://cancern.org.nz/index.html%3Fp=7279.html>

prompted the capacity to reshape relations between the public, state and private market – a belief that saw them utilise the earthquake to probe new articulations of what was possible in Christchurch. However, within the organisation there was a sense that, despite not knowing how these articulations should manifest, there was an inherent time and place for their activity. This caused constant questioning about how and when their activity should cease. This questioning appeared to be less about survival and more orientated towards a perception of what the earthquakes enabled them to do:

Simon: *So when does this all end? Do you just go on and on?* [asked in mid-2015, as the ItK Hub began to wind down]

John: Well, I'm surprised we're still here! We've always had a sense that CanCERN has a role to play in influencing what Christchurch looks like, but we know at the core we're a residential recovery organisation...Our belief is that we can show people that a new kind of Christchurch is possible, but by doing that through addressing all this bureaucratic crap. It's the way the situation has presented itself...it's the opportunity to say that, 'look, there needs to be a *we* [referring to connections between state and the public] in how politics works'...but also recognising that the time and place influences how we push that. There's no point banging a drum after the crowds have left, and we're really sticking to the idea that we were called to do a job...though it's a job that is impossible to say when it might be finished...I guess it's about being able to collectively step back and realise 'that drum can't be beaten anymore'.

Simon: *It sounds like you're being a little bit...open about things...a little bit of that old 'who knows what's next'...Forgive my cynicism, but is it a money thing? Is it a health thing? A 'I can't bang my head against the wall anymore' thing?* [numerous staff had been taking time off due to being stress]

John: Well in my case, sure, family and my other job comes into it...at the end of the day I need to put food on the table. But it's not that simple. The money would come if we want it. It's more a sense of...does the situation warrant us being here? As I've already told you, we felt strongly that the opportunity existed for us to achieve something, even if we weren't quite

able to put our fingers on how to do it. We've always said that we would stay around as long as CERA were, trying to implement those things. But in terms of saying 'that's it, we're done'...well you have to be able to read the situation to answer that...to question 'are we still a valid representation for how people are experiencing the recovery'? After a while you realise, no, the time for us has gone.

Simon: [in a joking manner] *and the legacy lives on, of course...*

John: Well you're close to the head of the nail. If we've communicated things right, used our limited energy usefully, the right people should know that the old way of doing things can't go on...that the impacts of these earthquakes have been more than physical...hopefully we've equipped people both in government and in the community with practical and real-world knowledge that what constitutes 'business as usual' needed, and still needs, to change. We've always held the belief that it takes people to change to make the system change. Hopefully we've played a role in that.
(7/07/15)

In this conversation, John portrays a sense that certain things were and weren't possible in post-quake Christchurch – a sense that was built, as previously explored, through a probing of the intensities that made up the recovery landscape. Inherent in his statement about not wanting to 'bang the drum after the crowd has left' was a perception that CanCERN's role in the recovery had a distinct temporality. Closure, in this instance, appeared to be less orientated around organisational resilience (see Stevenson, 2014), the dissipation of need (see Aldrich, 2012) or the expiry of a neoliberalised association with the state. Instead, it was reflective of an understanding that the spaces through which CanCERN itself could contribute to systematic change had closed down. Sitting behind this attitude, as John later described to me, was an understanding that one of their priorities was to help individuals who were experiencing difficulties in the recovery, but also ensuring that "...we don't end up hanging on for just our own sake" (Ethnographic fieldnotes, 7/07/15).

In addition to adding insight into the role that CanCERN saw themselves playing in post-quake Christchurch, John's comments are interesting for two further reasons. Firstly, they demonstrate an understanding that, despite CanCERN

having a 'time and place', that the relations to the event they practiced and facilitated (in others) was something which would live on. In the above, John describes the hope that individuals won't allow for political and ethical forms of experimentation that emerged post-quake to simply be assimilated back into the pre-quake status-quo. In this way, even though the organisation saw themselves as emblematic of a time, there was the belief that their activity prompted an on-going confirmation amongst users that the 'new' Christchurch had to be constituted differently – with their practices working to shape "the system" far beyond the organisation's existence.

Demonstrating fidelity here was about more than probing the landscape to bring about institutional and societal change. Rather, remaining faithful to the earthquake event denoted recognising that the rupture manifested in different ways for various actors, in turn generating multiple event spaces through which claims to the earthquakes could be made. The social, ethical and political forms of experimentation that took place during CanCERN's existence, then, served more than to probe what forms of change were possible. They also worked to prompt ongoing practices, performances and activity in the name of the event itself (as what John refers to as the 'shared knowledge that the earthquake recovery marked a point where things had to change'), with the belief that the quasi-state/interruption of the status-quo could be maintained even after the organisation ceased to exist. In addition, John's comments reveal an ambition that the broader perspective that the organisation stood for would be reflected through performances of fidelity other settings – a remark that was later supplemented by the admission that "...it would be great if this kind of approach, even though it failed in a number of ways, could keep going on long after we've left...in all sorts of different ways and in different places" (Ethnographic fieldnotes, 7/07/15). In this way, CanCERN's decision to cease operations is reflective both of an understanding that their role in the recovery landscape has closed, and a belief that the engagements fostered during this time would lead to on-going rejections of the former status-quo.

Secondly, the above conversation points towards the formation of relations to the earthquakes that were made in periods and spaces of uncertainty. John's rhetoric of not knowing exactly when to cease activity, and in referring to the opening up and closing down of space through which they could push for change, inferred a

kind of alignment to the determination of the earthquakes. As Hallward (2003, p. 43) points out, fidelity is not only about remaining loyal to something, but is about embracing the event's (in)determinacy in a way that is "...both utterly intimate (because it concerns you more profoundly than your actual interests or identity) and yet utterly impersonal (because it is both disinterested and non-identical)". This alignment with indeterminacy was reflected in a number of ways through CanCERN activity: through an uncertainty of how to achieve organisational aims, through hesitations around how to deal with 'discomfort within the membership'⁹⁸, and not least an overwhelming perception from my perspective that "they don't really have any idea what 'success' should look like...and can't quite seem to articulate it to me either" (Ethnographic diary, 22/5/15).

My consideration here is that post-quake subjects (and in this case, fidelities) were constructed in spaces of indeterminacy, marked by reflexive and haphazard analysis of the landscape. The closure of CanCERN, and indeed the difficulties they faced in their day-to-day activities, might be better understood by putting aside the assumption that experiences of 'falling short' were in themselves necessarily tragic failures. Instead, the testing and probing that CanCERN undertook in their 'unknowingness' revealed a simultaneous susceptibility and receptivity which were not attributes reflective of organisational resilience, for example, but rather might be considered as attributes that defined them in its fidelity-induced natality (see also see Lewis, 2003; Harrison, 2008). As a staff member noted, explaining the 'trial and error' process described previously, "...this kinda thing [the ItK Hub] hasn't been done in Christchurch before...we've been provided with a clean slate of sorts [referring to EQC being open to the Hub idea]... so it's an opportunity to try things and see what works and what doesn't" (Ethnographic journal, 10/06/15). Recognising when to shut down, in this instance, harked to the idea that the broader recovery landscape consisted of complex temporalities and agencies that imposed themselves on organisational projects and trajectories.

Pragmatically, it was in part this 'not knowing' that enabled CanCERN to explore, unfold and penetrate the aporias that the earthquake raised. Thinking about this agency in relation to existing conversations about third-sector-state relations, it

⁹⁸ see <http://cancern.org.nz/index.html%3Fp=7279.html>

would be easy to ignore these explorations – and in doing so dismiss their activity as a form of ‘public service on the cheap’ – willing partners who, seemingly guided by an understanding of progressive possibility, became partners in mopping up difficult to access citizens during recovery. However in this instance, and as discussed through this chapter, I have argued that a more fruitful line of questioning might focus on how ontological fissures bring alternative subjects and subjectivities into being. To attach narratives of resistance or co-option is to deny the complex and unfolding fidelities that are play in the post-quake landscape. To label its closure as the expiration of a neoliberalised compliance with the state is to ignore the logics and organisational experimentations that probed the opening and closing of spaces of progressive possibility.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the practices and rationalities that comprised organisational probings of politics and space after the Canterbury earthquakes. By focusing on the complexities faced by CanCERN, I have sought to examine the ways in which fidelity to the earthquakes shaped and influenced organisational activity. In doing so, I have drawn attention to the inherent complexities that underpin fidelity in this context – arguing that, whilst both community and institutional actors recognised the emergence of a ‘new’ Christchurch, fidelity might in fact consist of a series of contentious, contestable and problematic performances. For CanCERN, this most visibly manifested through the opening out of various ethical spaces of encounter which were marked by performances of experimentation and learning as they probed the various intensities that made up social and political space in post-quake Christchurch.

Consequently, in contrast to the view proposed by Badiou (2005), I have considered that fidelity, in this case, might be engaged with as a concept more nuanced than an ethical obligation to the event. For the organisation, here, a claim to fidelity was used as an enabler for political and social experimentation that sought to work towards revealing and performatively demonstrating the inefficiency, incompleteness and excessiveness of life under existing political regimes – enabling the organisation to challenge and test what might be achieved through the rubrics of the earthquakes. It was through an unfolding faithfulness

to what the organisation articulated as their 'role' in the post-quake landscape that CanCERN sought to contribute to a broader collective rejection of the status-quo. In doing so, I sought to demonstrate and explore CanCERN's understanding of what remaining faithful to the earthquake situation looked like in practice. Here, a faithfulness to the earthquake event was reflected in an organisational understanding of a 'time and place' through which social, political and ethical change could be pushed for, as well as a recognition that encounters within organisational spaces shaped the landscape far beyond the existence of initiatives themselves. This was not to suggest that CanCERN's reading of the situation was more 'authentic' than others, however, and I explored how their claim to fidelity arose amidst constant negotiation with other actors, each with their own fidelities.

In drawing attention to the discursive positionings and strategic organisational practices during earthquake recovery, this chapter has challenged two sets of literatures. Firstly, it has explored one instance where philosophies of the event might be explored empirically. In doing so, this chapter has examined how creative trajectories that emanated from the ruptures to the status quo sought to be sustained by improvisations that invoked and continued a fidelity to that event. The use of fidelity as a lens in this chapter has offered scope for an interpretation of post-disaster Christchurch as something more intricate than a drearily predictable return to the neoliberal status quo – and whose recovery is complexly entwined with a variety of agencies and temporalities. In doing so, I have sought to unpick the rationalities that have been contributing to the co-construction of new senses of life and place in Christchurch, including a focus on how these are realised. Organisational activity through the lens of fidelity, in this instance, revealed movements between different emergent earthquake spaces that were marked by actors with different fidelities undertaking problematic and messy investigations – each seeking to contribute to the construction of new orthodoxies.

Secondly, this chapter constructed a more nuanced account of third-sector relationships with the state and private-market. Albeit arising out of a context through which alternative possibilities and routes of political action were co-recognised (including by local and national government and insurance companies), I drew attention to organisational experimentations and failures to

present a more nuanced picture of how organisations identify and leverage space to enact change. Rather than working from a standpoint where third-sector activity might be understood as being co-opted or antagonistically subversive, I demonstrated that CanCERN moved discursively and, often, purposefully between the two in order to work towards ends that were seen as consistent with the possibilities of the event. In short, they demonstrated the capacity to extract themselves from the tenets of governance in various ways. These observations also pointed towards a more complex picture than was visible to service users (and, arguably, the media) – a disparity that profoundly shaped organisational encounters in the landscape.

However, critical questions remain around the extent to which fidelity might be entwined within political processes of representation and mediation. The latter discussion in this chapter has suggested that there is a distinct politics of mediation embedded in the practices by which new and old formations of the public are assembled through institutional and organisational practices. In this instance, although fidelity might be understood as an individual relation to the event (Cloeke, Dickinson, & Tupper, 2017), I sought to draw attention to the ways in which CanCERN both; represented a vehicle through which particular modes of fidelity might be practiced and sought to build a particular representation of a public that further constructed a sense of disenfranchisement post-quake. Consequently, there are a series of questions to be posed around how organisational conceptualisations and understandings of the ‘possible’ might contribute to the occluding of the emergence of particular relations to the event and other alternative political visions. This concern is explored in more depth in the next chapter, in relation to a set of emergent TSOs in Christchurch, referred to as the ‘city-making organisations’.

New Aesthetic Engagements

7.1 Introduction

In the previous two chapters, I explored how the Canterbury earthquakes have disrupted the imaginaries which had previously informed many individual and political narratives of the city. In doing so, I drew attention towards emergent positionings, experimentations and emotionally charged improvisations that invoked a fidelity to the nature and potential of that event. In those chapters, I explored how individuals (Chapter Five) and organisations (Chapter Six) enacted new logics of ethical sensibility and political engagement in the fissures created by the earthquakes. I argued that the emergence of alternative imaginaries and political carescapes was at least in part a response to a sense of disempowering inability on the part of most people to enact meaningful responses to the recovery landscape. However, I also reflected that these emergences represented the irruption of potentially disruptive imaginations and actions that were revealed, prompted and given momentum by the earthquake event.

In this chapter, I move to introduce and examine a set of organisations that made use of, and became recognisable in, the activity-spaces of demolished areas of the central city. These emergent organisations (which I collectively refer to as the ‘city-making organisations’ – later explored) represent a different strand of emergent TSO activity post-quake. Involved in the creation of aesthetic arenas in the devastated city-centre, these organisations have been working to prompt specific kinds of collective response-ability through novel and participatory uses of urban space. In advocating and experimenting with the use of temporary urban sites, they embody a different approach to that of conservative Christchurch – working to open out pockets of urban creativity and novelty in the political and physical fissures generated by the earthquakes. In doing so, I argue that these TSOs have brought forth a series of previously lesser-noticed ethical and aesthetic ideas and performative practices relating to transitional urbanism.

The purpose of this chapter is to pose a series of questions that explores the political and ethical rationalities of these city-making organisations in relation to the earthquakes. Understanding the role and rationalities of these TSOs means exploring how through the production of fleeting and ephemeral urban encounters these organisations seek to influence the wider ecology of things. I suggest that through the curation of imaginative and experimental spaces, these organisations might be fostering aesthetically-connective interventions that invite, encourage and impart an extension of their fidelity to the earthquakes. Specifically, it is my contention that the performance of transitional activities⁹⁹ in Christchurch has provided a deliberate sense of aesthetic connection with some of the transgressive potential of the rupture of the earthquake event. Subsequently, I explore how these connections have contributed to a complex, unfolding landscape – one that is marked by different traces of the rupture as notions of the ‘temporary’ are embedded in longer-term orthodoxy of the city.

For the purposes of this chapter, I wish to explore these practices and rationalities through two distinct lines of questioning. Firstly, *in what ways might the seemingly small, temporary and novel initiatives by these organisations be read as something else?* At first glance, it is difficult to see the impacts of these organisations as anything other than small and ephemeral. Discourses of impact already suggest that participation at a civic level is limited, raising questions about how these organisations might be wrapped up in a touristic rebranding of the city. In response, I question the political and ethical contributions of these organisations by exploring how the collective intervention of city-making activity might be working to shift/influence the status-quo of cultural politics in the city. Here, I explore the different registers through which this kind of activity might be read. This includes questioning the roles that these TSOs play in contributing to the emotional recoding of the city – generating and mediating the emergence of different affective and emotional atmospheres that seek impact not only to operate through individual interactions with urban sites, but also more collectively on the emergence of new performances and narrations of the city.

⁹⁹ Explored in-depth within this chapter, ‘transitional’ refers to the status of the city between the time of the earthquakes and full-recovery. The term in part emerges from the state-headed ‘Transition Recovery Plan’ that mapped trajectories of recovery for the city.

Secondly, *in what ways do these organisations leverage rhetorics of ‘transition’ to weave particular ethical strands into the recovered city?* If these organisations are involved in holding a kind of mirror up to the conservative imaginary of the city, how is this hoped to be laced into the ‘new Christchurch’? Through a detailed exploration of the organisational practices and positioning (particularly in relation to the state) of these TSOs, this chapter attends to the notion of fidelity by exploring how interpretations of the earthquakes shaped organisational efforts to carve open space for the embedding of possibilities for *something else* into the longer lasting tapestry of the city. At first glance, contrary to the CanCERN in the previous chapter, these organisations appear to be actively working to continue operations as Christchurch moves through different recovery phases – offering perhaps a different interpretation and performance of fidelity in relation to grasping the ongoing potential of the event.

The material for this chapter emerges from a range of entry points: interviews with four ‘city-making organisations’ (Gap Filler, Greening the Rubble, A Brave New City and Life in Vacant Spaces), in-depth participatory observation work at 13 events run by three of these TSOs¹⁰⁰ (including conversations and interviews with staff and users), as well as broader interviews with red-zone residents (as users of these initiatives). It begins by examining the narratives of transition and transitional urbanism that were cultivated in the fissures generated by the earthquakes. In the second section, I move to examine the ways in which these organisations have framed the earthquakes and sought to cultivate conditions that enable them to weave aspects of their activity into the re-emerging physical and social fabric of the city. Lastly, I focus specifically on narratives of engagement with earthquake affected citizens. The aim here is to explore the extent to which organisational fidelities and representations of the event are being imparted on local citizens.

7.2 Practices of ‘City-Making’

In amongst the spaces of demolition and destruction within the CBD of Christchurch there has been evidence of new sites of participatory activism and aesthetic engagement that are focused on alternative performances of place and

¹⁰⁰ Gap Filler, Greening the Rubble and A Brave New City. See Chapter Four for details of these research relationships.

community (see also Cloke & Conradson, forthcoming). These uses of space have taken multiple forms, including temporary art, large-scale murals, sport and entertainment installations, novel attractions (such as cycle-powered cinema) and ever-changing participatory activities (such as book exchanges, public poetry and community gatherings). All are designed to work as a counter to the emptiness and desolation within the city centre during recovery efforts. In doing so they have drawn people into spaces recognised as the political and economic strong-holds of the city. For the most part, the activation of these vacant spaces has been prompted by a series of new TSOs formed in the immediate aftermath of the earthquakes. These organisations have given rise to an experimental creative movement in Christchurch, focused on re-engaging displaced and disillusioned citizens in the co-production of space. In this section, I briefly introduce some of these organisations before moving to question more explicitly what values are being promulgated in their projects and spaces. Such values are important to unpick in order to examine fidelity in the latter half of this chapter.

Despite collectively giving rise to a creative movement, these TSOs have provoked engagements and engendered experimentation in different ways.¹⁰¹ Perhaps the most prominent, Gap Filler (formed in the aftermath of the 2010 quake) have used participatory propositions as a catalyst for alternative performances of the city. Many of these propositions have revolved around ‘pop-up’ type activities, where temporary installations have provided small-scale engagements that have changed and developed alongside the visible recovery of the city. More notable projects have included an outdoor ‘Dance-O-Mat’ (a coin-operated washing-machine-turned-jukebox with dance floor used for dance classes and impromptu public gatherings – see Figure 17), a short-term ‘Pallet Pavilion’ made of recycled wooden pallets (used to host concerts and community events – see Figure 18), the turning of rubble sites into large Monopoly (board game) squares (Figure 19) and the maintenance of a small-scale sports facility in a multi-purpose area called ‘The Commons’ (with free sports equipment, to encourage social interaction – Figure 20). More recently, a collaborative Super Street Arcade project allowed people to play video games on a screen that

¹⁰¹ Complete inventories of the activities of these organisations have been captured elsewhere. For more in-depth inventories of transitional projects, see Carlton & Vallance, 2013; MacPherson, 2016; Wesener, 2015; Bennett, Boidi, & Boles, 2012.

covered the side of a downtown building, including a Christchurch-adapted ‘Space Raiders: Attack of the Cones’ (in reference to the road cones that have become synonymous with the recovery landscape).

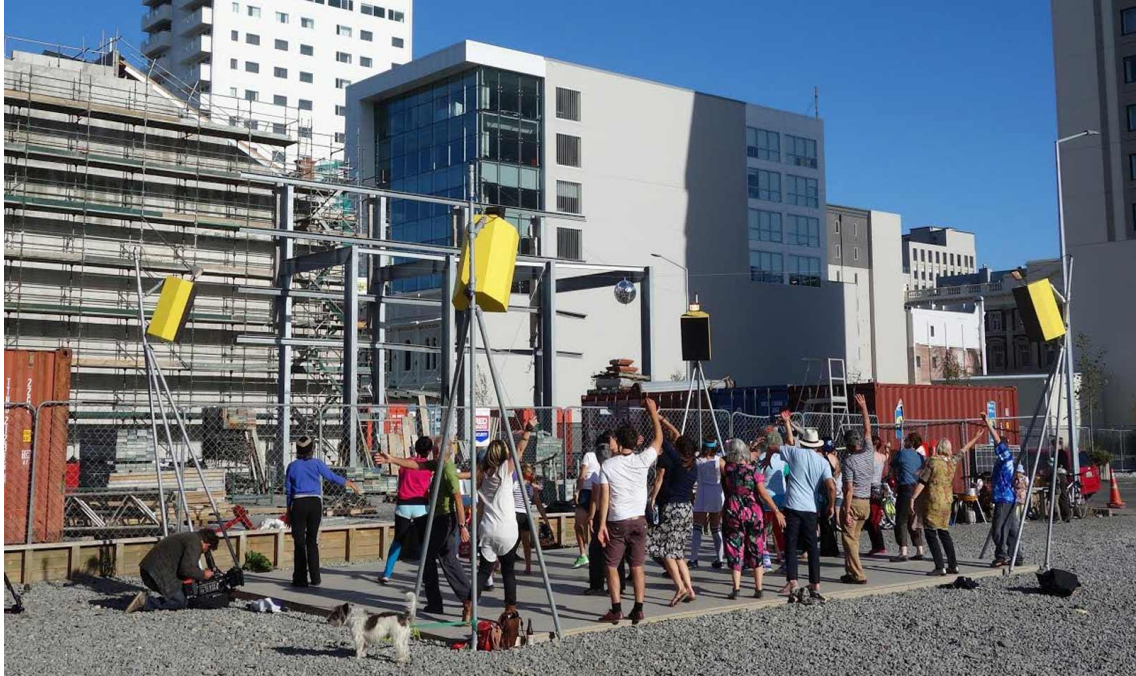


Figure 17: Gap Filler's Dance-O-Mat project (Gap Filler, 2013)



Figure 18: The Pallet Pavilion (Gap Filler, 2013)



Figure 19: The Gap Filler Monopoly Project (Stuff, 2013)



Figure 20: The Commons. Pictured are the Gap Filler and Greening the Rubble offices, as well as part of a mini-golf course

Secondly, Greening the Rubble have been involved in the construction of a series of community garden, green space and memorial sites – largely using recycled plants and materials from earthquake damaged zones. The intention with these projects has been to beautify temporary spaces in the city, but also to provide spaces where people can come and “...stop, relax and maybe re-engage with what’s happening in the central city” (interview, 11/03/15). The organisation has provided connection with damaged parts of the city and provoked imaginations of how conservation, sustainability and the natural environment might become part of urban lives in the new city. Projects have included: an urban tree exchange (with the tagline ‘Bring a plant. Take a plant’), The Green Lab (a green space designed to experiment with the types of plant life that could be integrated into urban life – and included ongoing talks and demonstrations from scientists), several Sound Spaces (see Figure 21) that worked to reconnect people with urban environments, and (in collaboration with the state’s Department of Conservation [DOC]) a prominent play space for families, reflecting the natural Canterbury landscape (Figure 22).



Figure 21: Greening the Rubble's Sound Garden project. Note the use of earthquake-damaged materials, including used fire-extinguishers (Greening the Rubble, 2013)



Figure 22: Nature Play Park project (Greening the Rubble, 2013)



Figure 23: A Brave New City's Tuam Street site soon after completion

The third-organisation that formed the basis of participatory observation work was A Brave New City. The organisation had been involved in running a series of public engagement projects and spaces designed to engage Christchurch citizens, with a view to create and prompt discussions and visions of what the future city might look like. In addition to stalls set up at pop-up events in the city centre (including at the aforementioned Pallet Pavilion), ABNC were most visibly known for their use of a prominent space in Tuam Street, shown in Figure 23. This site housed activities and installations in a similar vein to Gap Filler/Greening the Rubble (including projects with a sustainability focus, such as a pop-up bicycle repair hub and urban gardens), as well as large billboards that invited citizens to write responses to questions about the future of the city.

Lastly, linked in with these TSOS, Life in Vacant Spaces acts as an umbrella organisation working on behalf of these TSOs to manage privately owned property for landowners and find short and medium-term uses for vacant sites across the city. In many ways, this organisation works to unlock the possibility of the temporary use of space by focusing on the 'red tape'. It provides the specialist and technical knowledge needed to broker spaces for use for these creative organisations. As such, the organisation does not run its own, individual projects, but is a public partner of nearly all of the activities described above. Gap Filler, Greening the Rubble and Life in Vacant Spaces are all housed in the aforementioned space, The Commons. Located on land previously occupied by a now-demolished exclusive hotel, The Commons is an evolving space for some of the small-scale projects brought about by these TSOs. Used initially as the site for the Pallet Pavilion, it has now attracted a range of projects that maintain the community outlook, including micro-architectural installations, small-scale office space, social enterprises and small businesses. The Commons has since become a creative hub and meeting place in the central city.

Collectively, these organisations have given rise to a form of counter-culture in Christchurch that nods to both the destruction of the earthquakes (i.e. many of the projects are constructed from earthquake damaged material) and aspects of the localised imaginary of resilience described in Chapter Five. The emergence of novel, low-cost, ephemeral and often tongue-in-cheek activities reflect the

opportunity to engage with the city, albeit in pointedly reductionist ways. For example, one of Gap Filler's earlier projects – the 'Think Differently Book Exchange' (see Figure 24) – proclaimed itself as Christchurch's first 24 hour-a-day, 7-days-a-week, public book exchange containing texts that citizens found 'life-changing and challenging'. In reality, the exchange was an earthquake-damaged fridge, filled with books, on a large vacant site in the city centre. This project, in addition to many others like it, thus appeared not only to be working to create social spaces of connection to and within the city, but appeared to hark towards the notion that 'life goes on' in Christchurch against the backdrop of the disaster ravaged city-scape.



Figure 24: Gap Filler's Think Differently Book Exchange (used with permission from Amanda Fitzwater)

Subsequently, the term 'city-making organisation' is one that I have employed for this thesis given the ways the projects by these organisations represent attempts to re-engage and remake a traumatised city during its recovery. At first glance, these organisations have emerged through the material spaces created by the earthquakes in order to prompt engagements with the city as it goes about its recovery. The ongoing destruction of the urban environment appears to have lent itself to the creativity of temporary activities in the transition spaces of the city,

which is also in part a response to the lack of spaces for social interaction and gathering during the recovery process. With these TSOs, it appears envisaged that aesthetics can have a creative participatory role, through which self and other can be knitted together in an experience of community, and a responsive self as the experience of connection helps to develop a form of response-ability. The term 'city-making', therefore, reflects the ways in which organisational projects attempt to stimulate both material and ethical forms of urban engagement – both in the meantime and in the longer term.

To suggest that these organisations are simply side-projects to the bigger processes of recovery is to dismiss their radical political and ethical potential, however. Inherent in the emergence of these organisations has been the deliberate provocation of a new imagination and understanding of what the city currently is and can become. These organisations have demonstrated an openness to ingenuity and experimentation that, on the face of it, appears to counter the conservative approach to rebuild and recovery. As Cupples (2015) notes, in relation to the emergence of artwork and murals post-quake (some of which has been a result of projects by these TSOs), "...the creativity [of these projects] leaves you with a sense of hope for the future of the city, a sense of what is possible" (p.12). As such, in what follows I wish to explore, through reflections on my participatory observation within the above TSOs, the ways in which rhetorics of transition and experimentation within these projects reflect particular performative politics and ethics, and consequently a fidelity to the nature and potential of the earthquakes.

A Transitional Ethics

A significant part of these organisational projects has been the ways in which they have shaped and been shaped by discourses of 'transition'. The idea of transition is one that has been widely engaged with in the Christchurch landscape, and is often used to describe the period between the quakes and full recovery. Moreover, however, the label has taken root in the kinds of temporary projects and endeavours that have operated during this period of recovery, and Christchurch has said to have more broadly given rise to a form of 'transitional city' (see MacPherson, 2016). Most significantly, the 'transitional city' has become synonymous with both the carrying out of aspects of every-day life out within the

confines of a devastated and rapidly shifting city-scape and the emergence of experimental creative community projects that deliberately pull upon the fragility and dynamicity of this transitional environment.

This ongoing sense of transition played out in two ways for these organisations. Firstly, the changing nature of the transition landscape provided an apt opportunity to introduce a series of temporary, relatively unstructured bottom-up community orientated activities. In particular, the craving for socially connective space in the city centre, coupled with the growing availability of vacant land, led to a surge of activity that represented something different than the kinds of white-washed, conservative activities that were synonymous with the old Christchurch. In practice, for these organisations, this saw a general acceptance and interest in novel and unique projects that were formally seen as out-of-place in the city centre. As a Gap Filler staff member noted,

At the beginning we were just something. Something to do, something to look at it, something to think about. For a city that was struggling with this overwhelming sense of sadness and loss, these little, ground-up events and projects were something that got them to think about things in a different way. It didn't matter that they weren't flash or fancy. What mattered was that they represented the emergence of something amidst the misery and destruction. (Amanda, 12/03/15)

In the same vein, users of the projects often demonstrated an awareness of the rudimentary, makeshift and 'arty-fartsy' nature of some of the activities that had a kind of symbolic appeal given the destruction of the earthquakes. For example, at a Greening the Rubble event, I encountered someone who told me, "Bloody hell, I hate plants really and I wouldn't normally come to something like this...but it kind of fits. It's something different and fresh and makes you think" (ethnographic fieldnotes, 21/03/15). In another instance, while at Gap Filler's Dance-O-Mat, an elderly passer-by commented, "It's all a bit beyond me, why you'd want to dance in the middle of town...but I guess it's something different than another crane or horrible metal fence" (ethnographic fieldnotes, 09/06/15). On both of these occasions, and in many others, participants described a sense that the novel events of these organisations reflected the complexities of a transitioning city – providing not ostentatious or grand projects, but the

opportunity to do something other than ogle the destruction, in a city that was still visibly coming to grips with the ruinous nature of the quakes.

More specifically, the sense of the potential of projects that defied and counter-posed Christchurch's conservative nature was reflected in the emergence of previously subjugated aesthetic and performative projects. Their activities revealed that the event of the earthquakes brought forth a series of previously ethics and aesthetic ideas and performative practices that could flourish in a shocked, altered and transitioning cityscape. As Blundell (2013) noted, the arts had previously been segregated into something of a middle-class silo in the city, pushing against the conservatism of Christchurch from an outside and largely ignored position. In these kinds of ways (and with some exceptions), the neoliberalised arts of Christchurch before the earthquakes had been considered to have a somewhat docile presence in the city. They generally didn't disturb dominant place narratives, and seemingly couldn't present a wider platform for radically different alternatives to the conservative structures and urban cultures that prevailed (see also Parker, 2012).

Yet, the transitioning cityscape, including the economic propriety of the state recovery and response, enabled space for these kinds of creative, community projects that were previously seen the domain of the 'lefty'/liberal creative types to prosper (or, at least, emerge). As Ryan Reynolds, a significant figure behind Gap Filler stated,

For years prior to the quakes, as members of the Free Theatre Christchurch ensemble, we would routinely walk past vacant shops on the way to our central city theatre warehouse and discuss possible interventions – but we never followed through. The quakes galvanized our desire to act, heightening the importance of such symbolic performance. They also secured public support, of a sort. (In Newman-Storen & Reynolds, 2013, p. 49)

Here, Reynolds draws attention to the public support that had emerged through the emergence of activities that reflected something other than the sadness and anxiety attached to a CBD landscape that most of which was still, at that time, cordoned off and away from the public eye. Similarly, Lucas, from ABNC, drew

attention to the ways in which the destruction of the earthquake allowed small, community focused projects to emerge:

The earthquake literally shattered the city. It was obvious nothing big would emerge for years, maybe even a decade. That makes [these kinds of projects] possible. Things like this don't require huge buy-in, large amounts of money, and it appeals to the people. That's one of the things about transition...even the word itself has this unwritten permission to try things that are a bit different. (interview, 20/03/15)

The recovery period then not only reflected the opportunity for more small-scale and innovative projects of engagement, but also signalled the opening out of possibilities for projects and arts-based initiatives that had previously been seen as out of place in the city. The idea of a city in transition from destruction to recovery offered the possibility for small and temporary alternative projects to emerge that provided something in the meantime. This acknowledgement is not to undermine the role of subcultural communities (of graffiti artists, for example) in the pre-quake city, however the rupture of the earthquakes enlivened the notion that aesthetic arts-based performances could make contributions as it transitioned.

Secondly, the notion of transition became a call through which citizens were invited to consider the future of the city. These spaces and projects enabled performative gestures from people who felt excluded from the rebuild process, and had no other means of making sense of, and participating in the recovery of the city. In this way, the top-down (and widely regarded as undemocratic) blueprint for the city was counter-posed by a series of often random bottom-up projects that invited reflection on the trajectories of the city. Whereas the more formal, socially-produced spaces of the recovering city continued to pursue seemingly capitalist agendas of returning to the conservative status-quo, organisations expressed that it was in such emergent, community spaces through which the desire for something else could be formed.

Most explicitly, this saw projects curated around the possibility for different imaginations of the city. For A Brave New City, for example, this meant that all projects were based around a series of questions that invited reflection on its future:

A big part of what ABNC is about is grasping the moment and getting people to realise that this is a time in which the condition of our future lives can be decided.

The billboards [referring to the project on Tuam Street] aren't about getting people to map out a cohesive plan for an entire city. They're there to spark some thought about how the decisions that are made now, in this period of transition, will influence the quality of life for future generations of Cantabrians. They're designed to simultaneously be fun and make people think. (Lucas, founder, 20/03/15)

What resulted, for ABNC, was a series of colourful, large billboards with permanent markers through which citizens could respond to questions about what they hoped like to be in 2070 (see Figures 25 and 26 on the next page). These included, 'what will we be eating in 2070 and where will it come from?' and 'what does public space look like in 2070?' Often these billboard were accompanied by projects akin to those of Greening the Rubble and Gap Filler¹⁰², where users were invited to both immerse themselves in novel projects (such as a mini-golf course made largely from local/recycled wood and native plants) and then reflect on how such activities might be linked to the future of the city. For the organisation, the notion of 2070 became an important underpinning to their activities:

2070 was picked deliberately because, for most people, it's either the end of this generation and the beginning of the next. It forces people to think about how what we're doing now, how we're responding to the earthquakes, might influence what life will be like then. It's far enough away for people to imagine something different. But its close enough that people might realise the actions of now will shape whether it'll turn out that way. (interview, 20/03/15)

¹⁰² Or, in the case of their main Tuam Street site, Greening the Rubble provided materials and projects to work alongside the billboards.



Figure 25: ABNC billboard inviting responses about the future of governance in the city

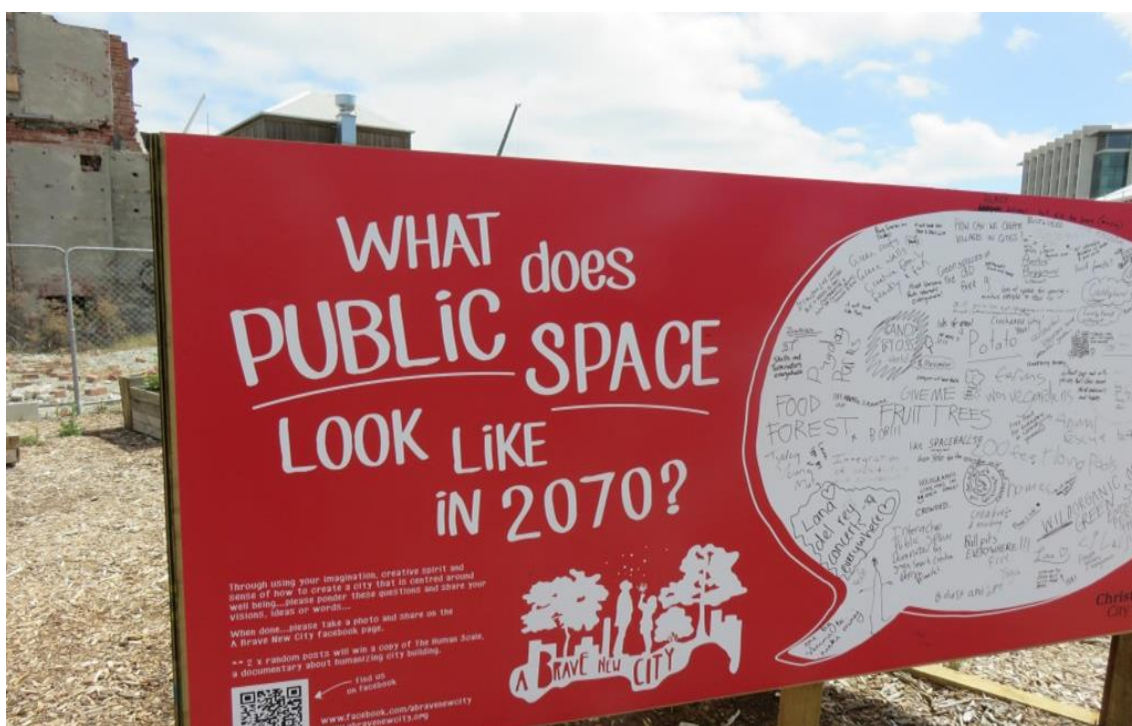


Figure 26: ABNC billboard inviting response about public space in the future city

In a similar vein, Gap Filler projects were in part designed to prompt the re-envisioning of urban futures through different forms of creative participation. Projects reflected the emergence of previously underground arts and performance based projects in the city, but also encouraged a questioning of how much engagements might contribute to the recovered city. Ryan Reynolds stated that foremost intention behind their urban interventions was to create and curate “a moving experience, simultaneously mourning, remembering all that has been lost, and celebrating the first steps of moving on, laying the ground work for the future...” (in Newman-Storen & Reynolds, 2013, p. 49).

Gap Filler’s Monopoly project, for example, invited citizens to question the values being attached to different sites during the transition period. The project, which transformed large rubble sites into painted Monopoly board style squares (complete with a life-size figurine, such as a digger) became one of the more globally recognised efforts of the organisation. During a Grandstandium (see Figure 27 next page)¹⁰³ event, a GF staff member described to the crowd that gathered that the nearby Monopoly site in Manchester Street was “...an opportunity to ask yourself...what is that spot worth to you? Is it valuable? Why is it valuable? The CCDU thinks its valuable but do you agree with them?” (ethnographic fieldnotes, 16/03/15) – a proposition that appeared to directly raise questions about the metrics of value held by community that contrasted with the multi-million dollar project that the site had been set aside for. This prompting of discussion on what was valued during transition was also reinforced by Ryan Reynolds, who reflected on the Monopoly project by saying:

Seeing the aerial shot of the Monopoly square of Manchester Street, I can only imagine what it must look like at the street level – perhaps quite comical? From above, I have the sense that the entire city is being treated like a game, a very real game of acquisition. Homes and shops and whole streets are up for grabs, to be bought, rented or skipped over. The politics

¹⁰³ This project is a relocatable mini-grandstand which was transported around the city and situated near controversial sites in the rebuild. The idea was to create infrastructure and public space through which members of the public could observe the demolition of sites – the most prolific event of which was its presence at the demolition of the controversial Centennial community pool in 2015. See <https://gapfiller.org.nz/project/grandstandium/>.

(or profiteering) of the redevelopment becomes horribly real in this context.
(in Newman-Storen & Reynolds, 2013, p. 50)

For Gap Filler, these complex temporalities – simultaneously drawing upon the past, present and future – reflected a more nuanced engagement with transition than simply a damaged and changing cityscape. Their projects were intended to represent a space from creative access to alterity could be accessed. They offer positive emotional creativity through direct participation in community empowerment, but also a wider affective experience that draws on a more general awareness of ordinary people engaging in new forms of imaginative thinking.



Figure 27: Gap Filler's Grandstandium project

In these instances, 'transitional' also reflects a calling upon post-political values and practices of citizenship that involve a mix of ethics and aesthetics as has been detected in research on transition towns (see Aiken, 2015; Neal, 2013; Scott-Cato and Hillier, 2010). Transitional urbanism specifically departs from the model of conventional urbanism in which most residents are characterised as consumers of the seemingly permanent developments that are served up to them by powerful interests, and hints instead at a new role for residents as active participants in new forms of urban place-making. Indeed, both Gap Filler and

Greening the Rubble spoke of drawing upon ethics and ideas of the Transition Town movement – which later led to the emergence of a formalised Transitional City movement, including the organising of public and international events by these organisations that celebrated transitional urbanism. This is later explored in section 7.3.

From this perspective, the activities of these TSOs reflect not simply the gap between one state-of-the-city and another but also the curation of projects that proposed questions about the future of its city (including the role of these transitional activities within it). The activity of these city-making organisations therefore also operates as process of release and empowerment that works to encourage a wide contingent of city dwellers – residents, activists, community groups, creatives and the like – to participate in envisaging and co-constructing city spaces that reflect something more than a transition back to top-down place-making. In so doing, rhetorics of transition were used to offer both a new imagination of how things can be, and to stimulate a new set of practices and performances that enact that imagination in amongst a wider environment of transition. In the following section, I move to examine the political rationalities of these organisations in more depth, before moving to explore the ways in which these propositional modes of thinking are hoped to prevail in the new Christchurch.

Spaces of Experimentation

In addition to drawing upon discourses of transition, central to the existence and activity of these organisation is the opening out of an unmistakeable permission to experiment. In a climate where aspects of the future of the city were unknown (despite a fear of a return to the top-down status-quo), experimentation became a performative discovery of urban identity through trial and error. The intention here was to turn the CBD in Christchurch to, at least to a small extent, a place where people *could* try things out, look for opportunities to create social value and attachments, and subsequently form imaginations for what engagement with the city could look like in future.

In the previous chapter, I drew out forms of organisational experimentation that sought to probe the nature of the earthquake event in Christchurch. However, here, the emphasis within these city-making organisation was more orientated

around engendering ephemeral and temporary experiments of social entrepreneurship in the city amongst its users. Reynolds (2014, p. 170) notes, in relation to Gap Filler's core ethos, that "...we strive for social impact – engaging the community, empowering people to be involved in the tangible reimagining of the city, collectively experimenting and sharing the results of these experiments." I noted the echoing of similar ideas by a GtR staff member at the launch of their Sound Garden project. Users were invited to "...experiment and reflect on how the noises and feelings you're producing compare to the hustle and bustle of construction around you" (ethnographic fieldnotes, 21/03/15). Both of these comments emphasised the underlying value-set of curating performance spaces that have the capacity for connection and response-ability, but ultimately left it to individuals to respond in their own ways.

It is through this opening out of experimentation that I argue the performance of transitional activities in Christchurch has provided a deliberate sense of aesthetic connection with some of the transgressive potential of the rupture of the earthquake event – albeit in different ways than identified in the practices of CanCERN. During my time at events run by these TSOs I was particularly struck by the terminologies that encouraged participants to juxtapose their use of transitional sites against the broader cityscape. Nowhere was this more visible, from my experience, than in regards to Gap Filler's Grandstandium. On one occasion I noted that participants were invited to, at a building demolition, "not just passively take this all in, but make sure you talk, think and look around! Think about the histories that are violently ending and beginning in front of [us]!" (ethnographic fieldnotes, 30/03/15). In later exploring this comment with a staff member, I was told, "It seems like a powerful statement, and I guess it is...but it's intended to be open ended. It might mean a history that is about another step forward for the CCDU. I was talking with someone today, and for them it represented an exciting step forward" (Amanda, 30/03/15). Later, in my journal I noted that "There seems a deliberate effort not to shove particular ideas down people's throats, but there's a definite effort to impart the idea there's something bigger happening than what was in front of our eyes" (30/03/15). It appeared that the organisations were working hard to establish a relationship between the aesthetics of the city and the possibility of ethical or political action – without articulating what that connection had to be.

Therefore, the use of vacant sites and projects such as the Grandstandium made it clear that the projects of city-making organisations catered as much to the performance of possibility and potential than just to the actual activity concerned. As Reynolds (2014) stated,

Many people confided in us their own ideas for what could or should be: the gap became a space that allowed people to project their own desires, at least some of which spoke to the much bigger picture of what Christchurch could be...open to trying new things. (p. 169)

For Gap Filler, this desire to curate and open out 'gaps' in the city ultimately shaped spaces through which the prompting of imaginaries of possibility were hoped to be the most significant outcome. Most pertinently, it was this catering to these experimental performances of possibility that sought to most directly form a response to the feeling of inability on the part of most to make any meaningful contribution to the rebuild process. Through these spaces of experimentation, Christchurch residents essentially became tourists in their own city, prone to discovering varying forms of meaningfulness in a unfamiliar, 'foreign' place. In so doing these citizens were more actively drawn into the performance of re-making place after the disaster event. Most visibly for Gap Filler, the Dance-O-Mat initiative represented a space through which people responded less to the project, and more to the sense of possibility that the space represented. As a staff member noted, "...sure, people do use it for dancing...but they also use it for yoga, for protesting, for gathering, for anything really...it's a space where anything goes, where people just have the freedom to act a bit wacky" (interview, 12/03/15).

Interestingly, it was this emphasis on the experimental possibilities that arose through individual engagements with transitional spaces that interestingly saw most of those involved in the study argue that they are not engaged in *formal* political processes. Rather than preaching prescribed politics or ethics, many organisations demonstrated that the sense that their responsibility lay in only rousing the possibility for transformation (see Newman-Storen & Reynolds, 2013). For example, Amanda (Gap Filler) stated that in these performances "humour appeals and fun is positive" but that "...there's always a deeper level if people wish to pick up on it" (interview, 12/03/15). Lucas (ABNC) reflected that

“There’s an obvious question in our projects about the direction the city is heading” but acknowledged that “...for some people, ABNC is about pretty billboards and something new to visit on a Saturday afternoon” (interview, 20/03/15). Similarly, a GtR staff member noted that there was a “thin line between pretty and political” but that, in a landscape where the government and local council had been critiqued with the sluggishness of recovery, “even the acknowledgement of pretty things become political statements for many people” (interview, 12/03/15). Consistent across these city-making organisations was a hesitation to denote their activity as having a direct political motive – a move that appeared to both reinforce aspirations of individual experimentation (including the capacity to contribute to re-making place however they desired) and enabled the formation of relationships with state bodies that embedded transitional thinking in the future of the city. This is explored further in the following section.

Although the emphasis within these projects was to foster experimental and experiential elements, it is important to note that these TSOs were still involved in tentative forms of experimentation themselves. By encouraging experimentation amongst its users, a process of potential urban innovation became recognised that was more orientated around Gap Filler staff termed ‘propositional city-making’. Active bottom-up solutions to the perceived deficiencies of the state controlled recovery and rebuild were enacted in small, low-cost temporary projects that carried low levels of risk. In turn, responses to the projects provided evaluative feedback that led to the withdrawal or adaptation of unsuccessful ideas, and recognition of the longer-lasting value of more successful ones.

An example of failure can be seen through Gap Filler’s ‘Commons Shelter Competition’ that had aimed to engage and build community around city-making by running a design competition to build a shelter at The Commons. In this instance, the cost of the project, as well as the subsequent lack of public involvement in the winning design, saw Gap Filler scrap the project just before it was built. In publishing a cartoon that explained their decision (see Appendix Six), the organisation stated that “The biggest obstacle to making the right decision was Pride. It hurt to admit that we’d screwed up...but we feel this could be an important lesson for Christchurch, where some politicians...stubbornly stick to

building anchor projects [sic].”¹⁰⁴ This example of responsive and ‘open’ social entrepreneurship is able to remain alert to the possibilities of the rupture in a way that more formal top-down blueprint planning in the city was not. Such experimentation is integrally interconnected to a significant intention of these TSOs – the desire to embed transitional experiments in the longer term process of urban development and planning. These transitional projects have evoked a desire to ensure that the responses generated by these projects endures beyond the completion of the concrete and glass blueprint (Matthews, 2015), not necessarily by making the projects themselves permanent, but rather as an enabling of the idea of experimental bottom-up city-building to prosper in future. It is to this I now turn.

7.3 Laying Claim to the City: Weaving a More Permanent Fabric

As I have already alluded to, there has been a concerted attempt to weave these transitional understandings into the unwinding fabric of a more lasting normality for the city. It is important to emphasise that the organisations concerned understand their work as being something more significant than providing temporary stopgaps whilst waiting for more lasting infrastructures of the new city to develop. Although many of the projects themselves are short in nature, the process and ethics that underlies them is one that is intended to live on. Nevertheless, the weaving of these transitional understandings into the city is not simply dependant on individual engagements with organisational spaces. Rather, I argue that these projects, and the practices of these organisations, might be explored as extending the conditions of the recovery landscape (or, at least, the interruption that it represented) in multifarious ways. It is here that I consider how ephemeral and temporary experiments of social entrepreneurship in the city are being worked to provoke longer-lasting traces of hope in a transitional imaginary.

In paying attention to the ways these organisations sought to embed both their practices and themselves in the re-emerging city, the discussion also shifts more explicitly to fidelity. Here, I explore how empirical discussions on how these TSOs attempted to influence the broader performance of the city opened up reflection about what it meant to stay faithful to the nature of the earthquakes. In response,

¹⁰⁴ A cartoon published by Gap Filler that describes the failure of this project can be found at: <http://us2.campaign-archive1.com/?u=0647c4a2ad05bbf3142dfb344&id=246b2b6bed>.

I consider the ways that organisational endeavours to carve open space for the embedding of transitional thinking reflects perceptions of the role that the earthquakes played in the narratives of the city.

As explored in the previous chapter, CanCERN held distinct beliefs about their role in the recovery landscape – beliefs that, I contended, inherently guided how they pushed and probed for various forms of institutional and procedural change (and was most explicitly evident through a desire not to persist operations as recovery wore on). The case of these city-making organisations, at first glance, appears to reflect something else. Gap Filler, Greening the Rubble and Life in Vacant Spaces are all still working to be active and visible in the city as recovery progresses. During this time, they have developed more noticeable connections with local and national government, as well as international activist/ethical movements. Such activities have seen a so-called ‘professionalisation’ of activities, with Gap Filler most prominently developing a consultancy arm to its work, whilst other organisations becoming the face of state-funded events designed to bring attention to the ‘innovative’ city centre. In doing so, these TSOs have come under the critique that their existence, survival and creativity is dependent upon state recognition – connections that in turn seemingly strip the radical potential of its activities and engagements in favour of the more mundane ‘creative’ practices of the Creative city (with an intentional capital ‘C’).¹⁰⁵ These discourses of the shifting radicality of these activities are more deeply explored in the last section of this chapter.

In what follows, I briefly draw out three avenues of relationality that have emerged through the activities, practices and rationalities of these city-making organisations. In doing so, I concurrently explore organisational rationales for how radical propositions of thinking and performing the city, including Reynolds’ (2014) notion of ‘desire for the gap’, are hoped to actually prevail in the new normal in Christchurch. This involves focusing separately on: the ways in which the fostering of collective affective atmospheres work to reshape the performance of the city, the ways in which rhetorics of transition are purposely employed by these groups to reshape governmental-TSO relationships and, the methods and

¹⁰⁵ See Mould’s (2015) text on the Creative City, through which he argues that creativity, including so-called creativity of low-scale ‘pop-up’ events, have become incorporated into the rolling mastodon of urban political architectures.

practices through which these TSOs connect to global and transnational movements and projects. These attempts to embed themselves in the city in different ways, I argue, opens up avenues through which fidelity might be observed, providing insight into the ways in which these organisations sought to realise, and remain faithful to, the potential of the earthquakes through different strategical endeavours.

Alternative ‘Vibes’ of the City

A significant characteristic of the Canterbury earthquakes, in addition to the material devastation generated both by the earth’s movement and the state’s response to it, has been the wider emotional blanket of anxiety and despair that has sat over the city during its recovery (Conradson, 2015). It is important to note that affective circulations and affective atmospheres are woven through the materialities of post-disaster life in different ways. As Cloke & Conradson (forthcoming) discuss, affective flows in the disaster landscape can mobilise communities, may reverberate emergent post-disaster initiatives, and often infuse the efforts of individuals and organisations as they seek to bestride, contest or evade state imaginaries. Whilst much attention has been paid to the circulation various affects within post-disaster communities (including those presented in Chapter Five), it is the ascription of hope and hopefulness to different forms of post-disaster life that I wish to dwell upon here.

As I have sought to illustrate throughout this thesis, despite government-driven engagement initiatives such as ‘Share an Idea’, the earthquakes have been followed by tensions between top-down governance and bottom-up alternative performances of place and community. Yet, in reality, the planned redevelopment of Christchurch city centre could be argued as being operationalised through practices of “top-down placemaking” (Ermacora & Bullivant, 2016), shaped largely by what political and economic actors have considered to be appropriate. The way this plays out is not unidimensional, however. On one hand, CERA’s blueprint plan for the central-city reflects national government priorities through the roll-out of formal planning mechanisms – enforcing a series of urban precincts and catalyst projects that were viewed as necessary elements in the rebuilding

of public and economic infrastructure. These include Retail¹⁰⁶ and Innovation¹⁰⁷ Precincts, and projects such as the contentious Christchurch Convention Centre¹⁰⁸

Yet, on the other, rhetorics and rationales for shaping the conditions for the emergence of particular forms of place-making occurs on the affective level. The rhetorics and discourses that are attached to tangible recovery directives work to shape subjectivities that conform to hegemonic/normative ideological programmes of recovery. Here, and as Cloke & Conradson (forthcoming) argue, what might seem like a cluster of rather imprecise impressions and expressions that are attached to a policy can in fact result in the development of a 'tone' which directs an atmosphere of response to that policy. This can include, for example, apparently implicit knowledge about how public benefits automatically arise from private sector development, or about what it takes to get investors on board for land-use projects in the city.

In the case of Christchurch, it could be argued that the business-orientated blueprint for the city has been accompanied by processes of affective impression-forming, to the point where particular kinds of affective atmospheres begin to envelop particular sites, attach themselves to recovery performances, most significantly, generate reason that shapes the feeling of existence in a way that reinforces conservative ways of performing the city.¹⁰⁹ In this way, returns to the normative, conservative Christchurch exists affectively, presented as actually existing affective qualities that form and condition emergent discourses and neoliberalisms (Anderson, 2009). More specifically, these affective senses, which include the ascribing of optimism and confidence in market-led investment, affording affective metrics of progress and success to the 'crane-scape' of the city, work to form rationalities that persuasively shape post-disaster expectations. However, just as crucially, these affective atmospheres work towards the trivialisation of possibility in other collective solutions. Viewed within the domains of neoliberal/conservative governance, transitional activity (by these city-making

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.otakaroltd.co.nz/anchor-projects/retail-precinct/>

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.innovationprecinct.nz/>

¹⁰⁸ <https://www.otakaroltd.co.nz/anchor-projects/convention-centre/>

¹⁰⁹ See <http://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/91881732/Christchurchs-emerging-precincts-show-vibrant-CBD-on-horizon> for an account of how these 'necessary' projects are designed to create a city with a particular 'feeling'.

organisations) becomes a kind of 'staged atmosphere' (Cloke & Conradson, forthcoming), viewed as a temporary, limited and manageable line of flight that holds a short-term utility in the progress towards the bigger processes and goals of recovery.

Despite this, a significant intention of the city-making TSOs has been the propagation and promulgation of alternative 'vibes' within the city. Many of these TSOs have been examined as playing a role in bring a new 'spirit' into the city (see MacPherson, 2016). The kinds of initiatives and projects brought about by these TSOs have worked to elicit feeling and emotion in participants and spectators which both complete and surpass the materiality and aesthetics of the activities that they're partaking in. In addition to prompting engagements with central city spaces, these projects can be viewed as giving rise to broader acknowledgements and atmospheres of possibility that directly counter the seemingly monolithic top-down blueprinting of the city.

The notion of bringing in an alternative spirit into the city was articulated as being an intrinsic part of organisational rationalities at different times. For example, Amanda (Gap Filler) stated that they were part of a movement to change the "vibe" of the city, replacing previous conservatism with a "cooler...more interesting...more open-minded" political culture that "...created the feeling that different and unusual projects that sees people experimenting with things are actually part of how a city should function" (interview, 12/03/15). In a later conversation, she commented that their role in the recovery landscape was about, "...ensuring people feel like they can contribute to things. We don't want that to ever end. The earthquakes need to mark a point where we force ourselves to remember that anything's possible" (interview, 9/06/15). Such comments begin to hint at the underlying rationalities of what it meant to be faithful to the earthquakes for Gap Filler.

Similarly, Lucas (ABNC) commented that their projects attempted to "...change the feeling that we should just be going along assuming someone else has our best interests at heart." Doing so involved prompting engagements that generated the sentiment that, "people should know they have the power to rebuild this city in a way that they want and [in doing so] realise that different kinds of questions can be asked to powers that aren't used to being asked such

questions” (interview, 20/03/15). FESTA Director, Jessica Halliday, also pointed towards a kind of force that sat behind transitional activity:

The reality is that Christchurch is still a hard place to live. Yet these [transitional] projects give you energy, and an outlet for your hopes and dreams. And right now it is one of the few ways that quite ordinary citizens can feel part of the remaking of the city. (quoted in Macfie, 2014, p. 375)

In these instances, ‘vibe’, ‘feeling’ and ‘energy’ were viewed as intrinsic parts of the transitional movement that worked to unlock a sense of possibility. Most interestingly, however, the use of such concepts demonstrates awareness by these organisations of their emotional and affective contributions to the city – reinforcing the previously explored idea that, despite claims of remaining apolitical, that they were bluntly holding up a mirror to the tones associated with the more formal state response to the quakes.

This idea was often articulated as bluntly as contributing to the formation of a culture that wasn’t seen at place in Christchurch, given apparent economic focus of recovery in the central city: “We’re trying to show that creative, communal projects aren’t just artsy-fartsy bullshit...but that they’re part of a functioning, successful city, even somewhere like here” (Jan, Ministry of Awesome, 27/03/15). In other instances, this was voiced as a form of community empowerment through the positive emotional creativities that such projects engendered: “My hope, and we’ve definitely started to notice it already, is that people look at these projects and said, ‘you know what, this stuff is choice [great], let’s start our own project and make Christchurch a different kinda place’” (Amanda, Gap Filler, 12/03/15).

An important rationale for organisations here was that these buildings of new affective formations shifted impact beyond individual uses of their CBD projects. The entertainment, fun and theatricality involved with individual projects were not simply ends in themselves, but served to potentially foster a common participation, ingenuity and ownership of places and events that extended beyond the transitional period. The intention was that the collective affective experience of particular places impacted upon the lived present and future possibilities of in-place experience – weaving in and embedding transitional thinking through the fostering of an alternative affective culture. For example, Ryan Reynolds (Gap Filler) stated that, “It [engagement with projects] happens; we can touch, see and

hear it, but the experience lives on, often outside the limitations of language.” (Newman-Storen & Reynolds, 2013, p. 53). Here, Reynolds describes the temporality of engagements with Gap Filler projects by pointing towards the kinds of affective experiences that live on beyond the act itself: “What should last forever” says Reynolds, “...is the process and mindset” (in Matthews, 2015).

The idea of excessiveness was also touched upon by a staff member of Greening the Rubble, who told me, after witnessing people relaxing and laying spread-eagled on the grass at a Places of Tranquillity site¹¹⁰, “The range of emotional responses always amazes people...often people just break down and can’t really put it into words exactly why...it’s responses like those that make it clear these kinds of things [referring to GtR projects] mean more than what the eye can see” (ethnographic fieldnotes, 28/03/15). The staff member later noted that,

That’s what brings people here....the first time visitors, you know? More often than not, people come to me and say ‘I came down because these projects show that a disaster can be a beautiful thing’. They want to be a part of the *post-earthquake culture* [emphasis added]. I hardly ever hear anyone saying ‘Oh, I came down to play these funny musical instruments’.
(ibid)

Even if only a minority of citizens are formally participating in these landscapes, public awareness of the associated interventions, installations and events has been widely circulated, and has inevitably resulted in such projects being seen as an integral part of what the new Christchurch is about. Here, for GtR, the projects themselves transcend their most basic purpose (that of giving people something to do in the devastated CBD), and works to generate encounters that contribute to the affective atmosphere of possibility that have begun to be taken up in the lived experience of the city. In these instances, remaining faithful to the earthquakes meant a commitment to fuelling the atmospheres of possibility that the disaster released.

In relation to ABNC, Lucas described that his organisation sought to leverage post-quake rhetorics of transition to contribute to a collective cultural/affective

¹¹⁰ <http://greeningtherubble.org.nz/our-projects/places-of-tranquility/>

shift, which is worth quoting at length given the way he argues ABNC projects produce different affects and ethical dispositions:

Look, no-one is going to make a life changing-decision writing down something on one of our billboards. But the physical act of writing something down, it plants a seed...a seed of thought perhaps about an issue, a problem or an idea that hadn't really stuck before. Perhaps they go home, reflect on it a bit. And then they share it with their friends and family...and then it gets shared with the next level of friends and family, and so on. Some things might get momentum, somethings might go over people's heads, but that's the whole point. I'm not here to tell people what life should be like...I just want to create an awareness that these kinds of questions [about the future direction of the city] can be asked....and that people have a right to be thinking about these things.

Later in the interview, responding to questions about the longevity of his organisation:

I don't think it's a case of saying 'look, we've achieved something a bit different, we've changed the course of action, my job is done'. That's too idealistic. I'm never going to see the end product of any of this...and I don't have a vision of what the end is. That's the thing about these projects...some people will take a big idea away, some will take something small, some not at all.

Some people might only heard the name 'A Brave New City' and take something from that. But these bits and pieces might map onto something else and that might inspire something...maybe a Facebook post, maybe sharing an idea with friends, maybe something more dramatic, who knows? Writing ideas down on a piece of card or a billboard is just a small act, a piece of reflection...but it feeds into a swirling mass of stuff happening here in Christchurch. (interview, 20/03/15)

Here, Lucas describes how engagements with ABNC projects work to afford a sensibility towards change over time. By his own admission, the ways in which this occurs is indeterminate and impossible to map, however he touches upon how he seeks to leverage the transitional period in Christchurch open up

evaluations of the changing urban landscape – aiming to contribute to a broader affective and cultural shift in Christchurch. In this way, even if only a minority of locals are formally participating in these landscapes or projects, public awareness of the associated interventions has inevitably come to the attention of people as an integral part of the experience of the city centre and as a method through which the public can engage with the recovery itself. It is in part through this ‘noticeability’ that transitional thinking contributes to something bigger than the sum of its parts. It lives on through acknowledgements that experimentation is possible and a part of how Christchurch is narrated.

For organisations, transition, then, involved not just making a claim on the future city through experimenting with the use of temporary urban sites, but also contributing to the production of something more collective, affective, and long-lasting. It involved performing the belief that ‘transition’ was not simply marked by a series of temporary stopgaps, aimed at providing a distraction whilst normal business was reinstated. However, of most importance here, these city-making organisations often demonstrated an awareness that the ‘noticeability’ of transitional activity partly existed as an affective quality that could contribute to alternative horizons of being. In employing concepts of fun, theatricality and entertainment in the curation of temporary urban projects, organisations indicated a desire to feed into broader cultural and affective shifts in the city. The earthquakes gave rise to a sense of possibility, and demonstrating fidelity to that event meant ensuring that this sense lived on in some way.

Whilst the outcome of this could not be envisaged, organisations exhibited a sense that rhetorics of transition could be leveraged to give birth to alternative engagements in the CBD – a disposition that inherently brimmed with political potential. The prompting of these affective energies, described as a change in ‘vibe’, ‘spirit’, ‘energy’ and ‘feeling’, subsequently worked to enable opportunities to sense alternative registers of knowledge and performance, to interact with implicit social and cultural learning and to build forms of communicative publics through innovation and experimentation. It was through these opportunities that organisations chased a kind of envelopment (described by ABNC as a ‘swirling mass of stuff’) that extended the reach of the city-making organisations beyond the individual projects themselves.

Shifting Institutional Relations

The previous section sought to explore the affective cultures that these TSOs sought to foster in order to weave their rationalities into the recovered city. I now shift attention to the relationships these organisations developed with the local and national state bodies during the transition period. As recovery has progressed in the city, these city-making organisations appear to have entrenched relationships with recovery focused agencies, and with the local council in particular. At the time of writing, Gap Filler's primary funder is the Christchurch City Council. Greening the Rubble also received funding from the CCC and have partnered with national agencies to further their projects. Both organisations have subsequently become wrapped up in the post-disaster council branding of the city.

As drawn out earlier in this thesis, relationships between TSOs and government tend to be written off as contributing to the construction of spaces of neoliberal responsibilisation. TSOs that have become drawn into financial, regulatory or contractual networks of contemporary governance are typically assumed to undergo total ideological, ethical, and institutional isomorphism (see Williams, Goodwin, & Cloke, 2014). The dominant narrative here is that TSO values supposedly become tainted as they pander to government requirements and expectations. In Christchurch, the assertion has been that the support received from the CCC, and their wider engagement with government and the private sector, has positioned these TSOs as neoliberally absorbed showcases of the innovative nature of state responses to the earthquakes. This narrative of supposed 'disaster entrepreneurship' has often accompanied by an assumption that moves by local council to get on board with TSO endeavours reflects not only a process of reasserting control but also to create a diversion from the bigger recovery problems. Such critiques have seen these TSOs labelled as both 'whimsical' and 'colourful band-aids' that disguise deeper issues within the city (Wesener, 2015).

However, city-making organisations often reflected a sense that forming relationships with local council, in particular, was a core part of their day-to-day existence. Whilst their main orientation was focused on designing and implementing transitional projects, organisations demonstrated that a part of

weaving transitional thinking into the new normal of the city required an understanding of the conditions that allowed these activities to be recognised. A significant part of this belief was that the rupture generated by the earthquake presented unique conditions through which their existence was made possible, but that the suspended city would soon give way a more structured urban politics. Whilst the suspension of signification inherent in the disaster event enabled their existence, organisations generally demonstrated an awareness that the event itself did not demand or necessitate their existence once a semblance of normality or control had been restored.

This acknowledgement resulted in a focus on exploring, shaping and strategically re-appropriating the political conditions that enabled their existence. One way of doing this involved the forming of 'close' relationships with governmental bodies that generated avenues to entrench and expand transitional projects. At the time of research, Gap Filler, Life in Vacant Spaces and Greening the Rubble had so-called 'soft-touch' relationships with the Christchurch City Council. These contractual agreements bound the organisations to complete a number of projects per year, in return for a small amount of funding and access to council-owned land for projects. Ministry of Awesome described 'working' contractual relationships with local council, which had resulted in the organisation receiving public funds for holding entrepreneurial events. A Brave New City received funding from local council, and its projects occupied Life in Vacant Space's sites (meaning they became wound up in broader transitional funding/resource allocation post-quake). In all of these agreements the Christchurch City Council appeared as a 'partner' on organisational advertising. In some select instances, such as the use of land acquired by CERA for central city development, earthquake recovery bodies were also present on material.

These agreements would appear to indicate the drawing in of TSOs into the confines of local governance, perhaps limiting the opportunities to pursue a confrontational or experimental opposition to state recovery efforts. Nevertheless, participants demonstrated a belief that the earthquakes opened up avenues through which new and empowering relationships with governmental institutions might be formed. Sitting behind this belief was a sense that recovery and state bodies were too undertaking processes of empirical experimentation as a means of exploring different visions for how recovery might play out. Such an attunement

towards experimentation meant that both 'sides' appeared willing to contribute towards a relationship that might not have played out in other circumstances. For Gap Filler, this manifested in a 'soft-touch' agreement that contained minimal reporting mechanisms and allowed them to implement projects as they saw fit:

Nope, no restrictions whatsoever. It's crazy if you think about it. I tried to do some community events before the earthquakes, and the hoops I had to jump through...obviously two different things, but the council are desperate to get people back here...I guess to the point where they're willing to help us help them. (Amanda, 12/03/15)

In a similar vein, for Greening the Rubble, this also saw local council remaining open to projects that it had little control over:

They leave us be, to be honest. They know the gist of what we're doing and they seem happy enough to leave it at that. I guess, unlike some of the other projects going round, the sustainable, green side of things is seen as pretty non-offensive and small scale...we keep them in the loop, of course, but that's about it. (Gabrielle, 11/03/15)

In both of these instances, it is clear that the earthquakes stimulated the opportunity to carry out activities with minimal regulatory obligation. Both Gap Filler and Greening the Rubble described these soft-touch agreements as giving a rise to a sense of freedom that was not previously afforded. Most visibly, for me, this could be seen even through the language used at events. For example, at the launch of an outdoor cinema, a Gap Filler staff member stated, "Thanks to the city council, who put a lot of the red tape aside and just let us develop this idea and run with it" (12/3/15). In another instance, this sense of freedom was demonstrated through an open critique of the CCDU's priorities: "To say that getting this project completed was an easy task would be a lie. Thanks to [staff member] for continually knocking her head against a wall when dealing with the short-sightedness and idiocy of Gerry's [Brownlee] cronies [referring either to CERA or the CCDU]" (7/2/15).

What was considered of more significance, however, was that organisations felt a sense of agency in determining the nature of council involvement. For the most part, this was defined as having the capacity to pull on council resources and

funding when needed and simultaneously maintaining creative control in the projects themselves. For example, ABNC described having a “pretty fluid” relationship with the CCC, which involved both “active discussion” with the council at times, whilst “realising that I need to be an independent voice” at others (20/03/15). For the organisation, and in particular its founder, there was a recognition that relationships with council bodies opened up opportunities (such as funding or access to specific sites) and closed down others:

When I set up a site at a market or event...sometimes its best if it's just us, you know? I want it to be a space where people can ask themselves questions about what needs to change...it gives the feeling of a space that represents the kind of bottom-up, community representation that just doesn't exist elsewhere. (interview, 20/03/15)

This recognition in itself points towards a more complex image of state-third-sector relations (in relation to the local council, anyway), with Reynolds demonstrated an awareness of both the capacity to move within and outside the tenets of local council and the value that ‘independent’ spaces had for community engagement.

The Dynamics of Incorporation

It is important to note that these TSOs did not believe that they were operating outside of local government strategies. Instead, organisations demonstrated a self-awareness of their value in different arenas. What resulted were processes whereby these organisations employed strategic practices in order to maintain a certain style of dialogue with council. Most commonly, the reflection saw organisations frame their activity in different ways to different recovery agencies, in order to establish and maintain soft-touch contracts.

In the case of Greening the Rubble, this meant playing-up the low-cost nature of their temporary projects. In some ways, this saw them dragged in and utilised as clear policy instrument in Christchurch – incorporated as a technology of using voluntary resources to achieve innovation that window-dresses the chaotic and heavily structured political economic processes of land ownership, investment, and state funding going on elsewhere in Christchurch. However, pushing the rhetoric that GtR could “get stuff done for cheap costs” (interview, 09/05/15), saw the organisation rationalise their activity within institutional conditions, thereby

strategically shaping the conditions of their agreement. As a staff member stated, describing how they advertise their projects to potential funders; “we’ve been making a pretty effective case for high-impact, low-impact projects” (interview, 12/03/15).¹¹¹ Demonstrating a similar strategic framing of activity, Gap Filler employed rhetorics of tourism and citizen engagement in order to rationalise their activity to local council:

Our projects mean different things to different people. Take the council...and even CERA, well, they’re happy people are visiting our sites, coming into town, doing something other than protesting [laughs]...it feeds into excitement building around the new city...but we’re trying to keep a bit of a track of who’s coming...numbers, those sorts of things. That’s the stuff they want to see. (Amanda, interview, 12/03/15)

Here, Gap Filler both described a process of articulating their value through citizen engagement and employing quantitative techniques to relay metrics of engagement to the local council. Whilst one might look at this with a cynical eye, for the organisation itself these framings operated as sensibilities and practices that worked strategically to shape relationships with local government. Recognising the value that their presence had in the political domain opened up avenues through which creative control might be maintained.

The significance of this is two-fold. Firstly, it demonstrates examples of the strategic methods used by TSOs in Christchurch to work within state ideologies and narratives to enable their presence to continue. Organisations demonstrated an awareness of the wider political and institutional conditions of the landscape by identifying, and in some respects conforming to, the expectations of state agencies. Contrary to previous accounts of TSO behaviours, these tactics did not represent a significant subversion of the regulatory subject formation necessarily (Barnes & Prior, 2009). Rather, they represented the formation and cultivation of rationalities that sought to meet conservative/neoliberal expectations of the third-sector, whilst simultaneously carving out interstitial spaces within the logics of disaster governance.

¹¹¹ ‘High-impact’ referring to maximum outreach/engagement, ‘low-impact’ referring to low-costs and infrastructure requirements.

The tendency, in academic arenas, has been to dismiss these kind of relationships as short-term pragmatism (enabling the survival of the organisation, perhaps), as an incorporation into neoliberal policies and postures to perform 'sticking plaster' work that either constitutes a temporary and controllable line of flight or, more malignantly, tempers any possibility of radical structural change (May & Cloke, 2014). However, in this instance, these organisations expressed that through dutifully performing the role of the 'sticking plaster', they were placed in a position whereby more progressive spaces of experimentation and invention could be rationalised in 'government speak'. In some ways this was validated as a kind of quid pro quo transaction where fitting into the top-down showcasing of the innovativeness of the state-led disaster recovery enabled further opportunities for transitional ethics to remain.¹¹²

Secondly, and related to this last point, these practices illustrate one method of weaving transitional thinking into the city, stimulating the conditions and relationships for ongoing practices of transitional urbanism. The strategy of working within governmental logics was viewed as one way of extending the earthquake event by attempting to further engrain the conditions that made transitional activism/urbanism possible. The rationale here was that the earthquake had opened up spaces through which transitional ethics and practices could be temporarily recognised as legitimate claims to the city, but that organisations had to strategically work to keep these spaces 'open'. As an ABNC staff member noted to me, when I asked whether demand for their projects was flagging, "One of my daily battles is thinking how to keep the momentum going...at times it seems like the best solution is another earthquake!" (10/06/15).

Specifically, an attunement to the objectives and values of the institutional bodies who in part generated the spaces through which their legitimacy was maintained was seen as vital in extending the conditions that enabled their emergence into the city. This involved recognising that, on top of the worldwide attention that the city-making organisations were garnering¹¹³, being wrapped up in the council

¹¹² Lucas (ABNC) described his projects as "...bringing people into the frame to ask how we might collectively reimagine Christchurch", a process that he admitted "...council might be happy with because it takes the onus off them a bit...but still looks like a fluffy, pretty 'let's get people involved in this' urban renewal project" (interview, 20/03/15).

¹¹³ See <http://www.rebuildchristchurch.co.nz/blog/2012/10/lonely-planet-acclaim-for-christchurch-priceless>

driven rebranding of the city subsequently legitimised and embedded their presence beyond the recovery phase. As Lucas (ANBC) stated,

Without the council, I'm just another guy heading up yet another 'let's change the world' project. Having their logo on my material gives me a kind of...[pauses]...a kind starting point which works for the everyone involved... it gets me access to certain sites for example...and from there something bigger can be launched. (20/03/15)

Demonstrated by these comments, city-making organisations often expressed the idea that buying into local council programmes opened up the possibility of more progressive activities in future. Sitting behind this was the belief was that the political system was ruptured in a way that new forms of practicing the city would emerge, but that the earthquakes were not significant enough to rupture the hold of conservative governance in Christchurch in the long-term.

Remaining faithful to the nature of the earthquakes, for these organisations, meant ensuring that they were used as a springboard through which new forms of practice-based normativities and communicative publics might emerge beyond the transition period. This is not to suggest that organisations articulated the transition period as a stopgap (i.e. 'in the meantime' as 'this will do for now'), but rather that conditions needed to be manipulated in order to weave the possibility for 'transitional ethos' and thinking to prevail in the future city.

Connecting Conversations: Tapping into Global Networks

In the previous two sections, I sought to present and explore two methods and avenues through which city-making organisations carved open space for transitional thinking in the recovering city. I described strategic practices that sought to conjure up the possibility that – as a marker of fidelity to the event of the earthquakes – a desire for the 'transitional gap' might become a more permanent feature of the city. In these instances, these attempts were very much focused on the local scale, with participant TSOs demonstrating an awareness of the ways in which transitional thinking/projects fed into affective atmospheres in the city and the value of their activities to the local council. Here I shift attention to the multifarious connections that these TSOs made with broader projects and movements. I argue that these connections represent a faithfulness to the

earthquakes as they aim to carve open space to embed transitional experiments in the longer term processes of planning in the city.

As recovery has worn on, a number of city-making organisations have become recognised as local edifices of global movements and networks. In many instances, organisations referred to themselves as ‘small parts of ongoing conversations’. This framing of their activity posited themselves as a kind of connective tissue across space; working as activators, brokers, and advocates for both domestic and international claims.¹¹⁴ These framings enabled organisations to draw upon international discourses and resources, whilst simultaneously developing transnational networks of support as an operational strategy for the defence of their place in Christchurch.

For example, Gap Filler have been active in drawing upon and contributing to the transitional urbanism movement – with established connections to both the Renew Newcastle project in Australia and other Transition Town¹¹⁵ projects globally (Life in Vacant Spaces also have connections to the Newcastle project). This has been driven by a desire to broaden the conversation about what the earthquakes enabled to happen in Christchurch. Included in this has been the design of an Adaptive Urbanism Conference in Christchurch (held in 2014 and 2015)¹¹⁶, contribution to an internationally advertised annual festival celebrating ‘urban creativity’¹¹⁷ and, most substantially, the development of a consulting arm that provides input and strategic direction to other adaptive urban projects globally. At the time of writing, Gap Filler have provided consultation services to both governmental and community projects in New Zealand, the UK, Denmark, USA and Nepal.

More recently, staff from Gap Filler have collaborated (with many others) to form an organisation called Te Pūtahi – with the tagline ‘Christchurch centre for architecture and city-making: growing people and places together’.¹¹⁸ Evolving from the abovementioned annual festival, FESTA, the organisation seeks to draw both on local and international knowledge to inform the process of ‘making a

¹¹⁴ See Tarrow (2005) for other non-disaster related examples.

¹¹⁵ <http://transitionnetwork.org/>

¹¹⁶ <http://www.adaptiveurbanism.org.nz/>

¹¹⁷ <http://festa.org.nz/>

¹¹⁸ <http://teputahi.org.nz/>

better Christchurch' from a self-proclaimed independent position. This has included the bringing over of international academics and figures in the transitional urbanism scene in order to "continue conversations about how public...spaces can be transformed with temporary interventions and how such interventions can have long-term impacts on planning, governance and urban life" (Te Pūtahi, 2017).

This kind of national and global orientation can be seen in other city-making TSOs also. ABNC is a part of the Sharing Cities Network, an online network that seeks to globalise local actions by connecting "...those interested in developing the commons, cooperatives, peer to peer support projects, Sharing Cities, gift economy [and the] solidarity economy".¹¹⁹ In addition, ABNC have an extensive social media presence that has seen their projects widely published on a range of global sustainability project pages. The head of the organisation joked to me one day that he felt more people overseas knew about his organisation than in Christchurch.

Greening the Rubble, on the other hand, turned to national and international networks largely in the search for specialist and technical knowledge about designing temporary green spaces. Interestingly here, however, was that these connections served a secondary purpose: "the community garden world, despite being global, is pretty close knit...once people realised what we were doing we had offers coming in, and people sharing news of our projects and successes...maybe not viewing it in the same way as us, but seeing it as a pretty 'beauty emerging from disaster' story" (Jan, interview, 11/03/15). Furthermore, the Ministry of Awesome pushes its international connections, stating that they "...have strong connections with national and overseas entrepreneurial ecosystems [to] envision a world where each community has a Ministry of Awesome connecting and activating entrepreneurs and social innovators".¹²⁰ Similar to Gap Filler, these 'connections [with] overseas entrepreneurial ecosystems' includes a contracting arm and connections to international initiatives, such as GovHack.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ <http://www.shareable.net/sharing-cities>

¹²⁰ <http://ministryofawesome.com/about/>

¹²¹ <https://www.govhack.org/>

But what drove these connections? At first glance, it might seem paradoxical to assert that these TSOs might simultaneously be focused on uprooting entrenched narratives of a specific landscape, yet open to drawing from less-situated movements and conversations. These networks, at first glance, don't appear to be fixed and dependant architectures, but rather fractal structures that enable discursive and diverse couplings with other sites and networks (see Escobar, 2001). For these organisations, these networks appear to be apparatuses for the production and embedding of discourses and practices that extend the earthquake interruption in different ways. More specifically, organisations spoke of the need of veritable modes of articulation between different scales in three ways:

Firstly, some of the city-making organisations viewed the tapping into larger networks as part of the process of gaining political legitimacy. As explored in the previous section, in employing rhetorics of the earthquake to manage and shape political relations, organisations carved out space through which particular forms of aesthetic experimentation were possible. A part of this involved recognising the methods through which emergent organisations provided value for political institutions. Although not always driving the connections specifically, connections with international initiatives and projects were viewed as a currency that enabled the interstitial fissures through which organisations operated to remain open – not only extending their presence in the Christchurch landscape, but enabling the capacity to contribute to narratives of what the new Christchurch was 'about'. Gap Filler, in particular, appeared aware of the ways in which their international presence was regarded by local council:

When we make overseas contacts, we're not seen as just representing a creative community thing...we're representing the 'Christchurch recovery' and everyone who's involved with it, including the council. The transition thing is bigger than us...that means that other people have a vested concern in what we do, whether they're involved with us or not. In the council's eyes...we're a platform to show the world the Christchurch is open to a cool, community-orientated way of doing things. (Amanda, 23/3/17)

In this instance, the staff member touches upon partaking in the building of new imaginaries of Christchurch and being enrolled in the dissemination of it to particular audiences. A similar line of thought was echoed by a Ministry of Awesome staff member when explaining the relationship they had with local council:

There's so many projects like ours happening all around the world. We want to get those people here...to inject a bit of life and excitement and entrepreneurship into this place...the local council is on board with that too. When we pitch ourselves around the world we're pitching a city that has a blank canvas, a kind of canvas where something different can happen. That means the council is with us, otherwise the canvas wouldn't be blank, would it? (Holly, pers. comm., 29/03/15)

In both of these cases, it was through a form of international connectedness that their claim to the earthquakes is further embedded in the city via an acknowledgement of political legitimacy. The 'soft-touch' agreements with local council, particularly at Gap Filler, generated the capacity and ability to weave transitional thinking into the fabric of the rebuilt city as they identified a route through which organisational claims could be met whilst also playing the part of the 'little platoon' of local governance.

Resultantly, the emergence and operation of networks around transitional urbanism became central to providing a form of momentum to their cause. Yet, also sitting behind these comments is an understanding that, in connecting to broader conversations about sustainability, adaptive urbanism and urban creativity, these organisations believed they were shifting away from ephemeral and fleeting interventions in the reinstatement of the status-quo. As the ABNC head stated, in response to questions about working collaboratively with council, "a chap got in touch when the Sharing Cities initiative news came out...a cynic might say they [the council] saw some value in me then" (20/03/15). Despite sharing cynicism over the nature of the connection (and stressing the need to make independent democratic claims on the city), the staff member subsequently stated that joining the initiative had paid off already if local council were wanting to be involved. From his perspective, it appeared as though his organisation had

shifted away from the periphery of city re-making, into a place that his faithfulness to what the earthquakes represented was being recognised as legitimate.

Secondly, the tapping into global networks was viewed as a way of pushing the earthquake situation towards a tipping point. Before the quakes it had been inconceivable that the voids and excesses of transitional urbanism could break out into the established urban order. However, an ongoing fidelity to the event witnessed a significant if unpredictable emergence of transitional urbanism in Christchurch. This included new senses of life and place and a new imagination encouraged by sites and practices that represented a *temporary* breaking free from bureaucracy. However, for these organisations, the earthquakes only afforded discursive opportunities for different performances and improvisations – it did not guarantee that they had a meaningful place in the recovered city. The earthquakes, for example, did not appear to demand that the city be reconstructed in a particular way.

Staff at ABNC and Greening the Rubble, in particular, spoke of the belief that the disaster generated fissures through which alternative horizons of being could be imagined. However they shared a fear that these would soon be subsumed by a return to the status-quo. This was often described as the ‘earthquakes not being big enough’. As a staff member of Gap Filler commented, “The earthquakes weren’t enough...they were big enough to interrupt life, sure, but not change things by themselves” (Amanda, 12/03/15). As already drawn attention to, Lucas of ABNC also indicated that, without these strategies and connections, that his cause required ‘another earthquake’ in order to keep the momentum that had been generated in Christchurch. Given this, the earthquakes were not viewed as a new beginning as such but rather a situation that only revealed the potentiality of alternative horizons of being. Remaining faithful to the nature of the earthquakes, then, saw the linking up with national and global networks to both sustain individual movement and network identities and to prise open the ‘evental’ nature of the earthquakes.

Interestingly, this often involved pulling upon more-global rhetorics in a deliberate way. For ABNC, this involved a deliberate framing of their urban sites that tapped into specific discourses, but ignored others. Lucas (ABNC) explained in relation to their billboard project,

You'll notice that there's a sign asking people to write about *governance*. There's lots of stuff going on in the world at the moment about it...it's a word that has a particular connotation. Same with *public space*. Things about sustainability and the like sit behind that, but people don't clock into the idea of sustainability in the same way at the moment, you know? It's become a bit of an over-used buzzword here. (interview, 20/03/15)

Here, Lucas touches upon the ways in which different terminologies and discourses resonated with Christchurch citizens. In this instance, sustainability (which sits at the very core of ABNC's mantra) was deliberately eschewed as it was entwined within state languages of recovery. The ABNC approach was to employ ideas that had some form of global momentum and meaning, enabled reflection on how sustainability might be entwined in other concepts and provided a method through which political critique might be made.

Similar feelings were expressed by Gap Filler staff, one of whom described the power of the terminology of the 'local' that was associated with their tapping into adaptive urbanism conversations. In these cases, the importance of bottom-up, small scale responses to global concerns (such as climate change) appeared to drive conversations around transitional and adaptive urbanism globally. Specifically in relation to Christchurch, in a deliberate counter to the perceived intrusion of national government in the rebuild effort, discourses of 'the local' also offered the opening up of avenues of comparison and, thus, political critique. Tapping into projects and ideas that stressed the need for local responses to bigger issues not only gave the organisation a form of legitimacy, but also worked to further prise open the political fissures that had enabled their existence in the first place.

Thirdly, some of the city-making organisations rationalised the earthquakes as a rupture in a broader, more global regime of conservatism (which was generally labelled as neoliberalism). Whilst inherent focus was placed on weaving transitional ethics into Christchurch specifically, some participants articulated the need to contribute to furthering their claims beyond the local setting, forming a kind of network activism. Sitting behind the line of thought appeared to be a belief that the disaster landscape in Christchurch was unique and therefore globally unprecedented. As Ryan Reynolds noted, "we are working to be part of

something bigger than ourselves, and more comprehensive and meaningful than any of us could do on our own” (in Gap Filler, 2015).

Connecting to more broadly circulating conversations, then, became not just about embedding local forms of global movements/conversations, but also globalising local actions and opportunities. As evidenced above, this often manifested through the articulation of an obligation to work beyond the local context. For example, in responding to a question from the public about the ‘applicability’ of Gap Filler in other settings, a staff member responded,

Maybe we’ve been presented with a perfect scenario to do this where the conditions were just right. But that makes it our duty to work with others from around the world to help them figure out what good conditions look like. You don’t need an earthquake to do this...it’s just one way of kick-starting projects. (Amanda, 12/03/15)

This sense of ‘duty’ underpinned the design of Gap Filler’s consulting arm – where staff members communicated a desire to build on what was playing out in Christchurch. Similar lines of thought were also echoed by Ministry of Awesome where a staff member, at one point rather bombastically, told a local event that, “...what we have in Christchurch has never been seen before. The city is laboratory. Imagine a world where this was possible in every country you can go to. That’s what this could be the beginnings of” (ethnographic fieldnotes, 02/06/15). Although perhaps overplayed as a method to motivate the listening crowd, this echoes a similar line of thought to Gap Filler, above, where a perceived sense of uniqueness was viewed as something that ought to contribute to more global movements in some way.

In this way, these city-making organisations viewed themselves similar to what Cumbers et al. (2008) term ‘imagineers’. Imagineers are defined as grassroots vectors who contribute to the organisational work of emergent movements. The imagineers attempt to ‘ground’ the concept or imaginary of the network – what it is, how it works, what it is attempting to achieve – within various communities who share similar ideals or aspirations. Importantly, however, imagineers view themselves as embodying the networks in which they work.

Crucially, in relation to my exploration of fidelity, the role of the imagineer sees an expansion of the visions of collective responsibility that are afforded through the rupture of the status-quo. Contrary to CanCERN, for example, whose earthquake claims were orientated towards local political change, the activity of city-making organisations sought to employ rhetorics of collective responsibility in a deliberately multi-scalar way. Remaining faithful to the nature of the earthquakes, in these instances, appeared to be about acknowledging that the disaster instilled the possibility for change and in turn provided the agency through which alternative futures might be contested in more public and meaningful ways. In doing so, these organisations embodied logics that sought to engrain these possibilities at a more local level whilst simultaneously recognising that the earthquakes (combined with the worldwide attention they had garnered) represented the opening up of fissures in a more global conservative political ideology.

The discussion to date has largely been focused on how organisational strategies and rationalities reveal interpretations and meanings attached to the earthquakes in Christchurch. In what follows I shift attention to interactions with citizens who engaged with these projects during my fieldwork. The underlying rationale sitting behind this shift is to explore the ways in which the interpretations of the earthquakes that guided organisational activity are being imparted upon the people who use them.

7.4 Narratives of Declining Radical Potential

Relatively absent from my examination of these organisations so far has been an exploration of how these projects and practices have been received by those in Christchurch. As pointed to in the early stages of this chapter, the activities of these TSOs have been widely documented. Whilst much of this coverage has heralded the emergence of urban creativity that “...would never have flown in past Christchurch” (Moore, 2014), some of this attention has argued that such willingness to be incorporated into the conservative and neoliberal orthodoxies of the state/local council has shaped public engagement (see Wesener, 2015). The common claim here has been that the support (including funding) received from Christchurch City Council, connections with CERA and the CCDU (in providing temporary access to government-acquired sites for projects) has stripped

projects of their political potential in some way. As such, I wish to briefly explore how these assumptions inherently shaped how local citizens engaged with transitional projects, questioning how local citizens engaged with the ethics strands proposed by these transitional projects. The intention here is not to provide an extensive overview of the city's response to these projects, but rather to reflect on material gathered from conversations with members of the public at events run by these TSOs.

Those interviewed in Christchurch indicated that, early on in the recovery efforts, the activities of these TSOs provided a sense of aesthetic connection with the notion that the earthquakes represented a rupture in the existing representations of the city. For example, those in the red-zone study identified such projects as being one of the few spaces through which thoughts and aspirations independent of those generated by the state could be voiced. As one participant stated, "Oh yes, Gap Filler...early on they were fun, they were different, they were...edgy. It was because of that they caught my attention, you know...something that wasn't expected. They made me go 'Oh here we go, this could be the start of something exciting'" (Donna, 23/03/15). In this instance, and many others, participants drew attention to the idea that the presence of something seemingly radical in the Christchurch landscape evidenced the idea that the earthquakes represented more than a geophysical event to recover from – instead enabling the questioning and contesting of the narratives that seemingly held pre-quake Christchurch together.

However, bluntly, over time the intention of these TSOs to foster political questions, performances and engagements in Christchurch appears not to have been a powerful source of solidarity amongst local populations. The perceived closeness of these organisations and the operations of council post-quake appeared to heavily influence local engagement with projects. Rather than operating as a vehicle for civic engagement, voice and action post-quake, city-making organisations tended to be viewed as a form of local civic infrastructure that had been incorporated into the re-establishment of the political status-quo. For users of these transitional projects, this was reflected in a shift in the types of engagements that such spaces offered:

I visited some of the Gap-Filler sites initially. They were interesting, and got me back into the central city early on, but after a while it seemed like it became less about us and more about the tourists. I'm still here obviously, but just in passing... (ethnographic fieldnotes, Colombo Street urban park, 03/03/15)

This comment, which touches upon the changing nature of Gap Filler sites, was reflective of many I came across during my fieldwork. Much of the discussion around Gap Filler and Greening the Rubble projects indicated a kind of temporality where the kinds of engagements that these projects and initiatives offered transformed over time. It is this temporality that I want to reflect upon in what follows.

Changes were generally articulated by users in two ways. Firstly, users described that the kinds of spaces generated by these organisations became less relevant as the city went through stages of recovery, particularly as larger and seemingly more important questions about the future of the city arose. Of those encountered, questions around the legality and role of the state in securing land for the anchor projects, as well as ongoing insurance battles that were delaying recovery in the CBD, appeared to be bigger issues of concern. In these instances, whilst these projects were viewed as something more theatrical and novel, they were not viewed as spaces through which the future of the city might be reflected on. On numerous occasions I encountered citizens who explained their rationale for using such sites as something like, "I just needed somewhere to take the kids that wasn't too depressing!" (ethnographic fieldnotes, ABNC Tuam Street site, 19/05/15). In one instance, after a Greening the Rubble staff member spoke about 'contributing to building a new, sustainable city', I overheard a participant state to their companion, "God, can't we just leave the politics at the front door for once" (ethnographic fieldnotes, 21/03/15). Such a comment felt like exasperation that such spaces were still trying to tap into the politics of the recovery landscape.

Secondly, participants often pointed towards the perceived ethics of city-making organisations (and their projects) changing as they became entwined with state agencies and overseas networks. Sitting behind these descriptions as a feeling that organisations had sold-out in order to continue their activity – chasing the

financial security that council funding provided. Indicative of this theme, one respondent stated:

It was always exciting when you heard about a new project opening up in town but after a while you began to ask yourself what the point was. It had a wide appeal initially because it got people involved, asking cool questions...they were places to actually meet people and talk about things, you know. After a while though it just seemed to be more about surviving for the sake of it. It lost a bit of its meaning. (Sarah, red-zone interviewee, 2/03/15)

What is of interest here is not just the ways in which participants identified a perceived 'selling out', but the ways in which it shaped understandings as to what ends the transitional spaces served. It is important to note here that, despite articulating a sense of cynicism about how organisations subsisted, that participants still tended to visit these projects. Often, however, the ways in which citizens engaged with projects shifted:

Oh, at the beginning it was like...it was like, such a contrast to everything going on. There was still bits blocked off, people couldn't get into their homes and businesses and such...but the fact you could go and dance and meet people [referring to the Dance-O-Mat]...that was a real middle finger to the government I think...a big 'stuff you, we can still do what we want'

Later in the conversation:

I went down to the Commons bit, by the old hotel, last week actually...we took our new Chinese student down. It was the first time I had been in a month or two, and it's still all good fun of course...I mean, it's just part of the scenery now, but it was a good chance to show [student] that Christchurch still has some fun stuff to do. I think she thought we were crazy when we tried to get her to dance to Saturday Night Fever in the middle of town though! [laughs] (Chrissy, red-zone interviewee, 13/02/15)

In this excerpt, the participant refers to a perceived changing nature of transitional activity, highlighting the ways in which projects, which initially elicited a strong response, became integrated into the backdrop of the Canterbury recovery

landscape. For her, there was an apparent temporality in the ways in which transitional activity provided a terrain of alternative possibility and action. The thought, in the early projects curated and designed by these TSOs, was that they enabled engagements and thought processes that exceeded governing forms of individual conscience and public reason – with the creation of space for different thinking and new actions that offered a route outside of conforming to the structural norm. In short, the projects were something *different*, *unpredicted* and came from somewhere *unexpected*. These attributes, in themselves, in part provided the grounds and space to critique existing governing structures and practices. It appeared, for participants, that these projects, emanating from a sphere outside of government and the private market, fostered the possibility of the drawing of a new ‘social’, where a different narrative of the city might be organised.

However, in the same vein, others also described the ways in which transitional projects lost their impact as the recovery wore on. Projects that initially seemed “edgy and cool” appeared to have become muddled by “all sorts of stuff trying to make Christchurch cool for people to visit” (Julie, 24/03/15). These ideas were shared by many I spoke to, who often described the erosion of a distinction between city-making organisations, the city-council and CERA as they all set about producing (often collectively) projects to re-engage citizens with the city centre. Similar conflation was also noted during my ethnographic work with city-making observations, where I noted comments from members of the public who appeared confused as to why city council staff were present at these events. In one instance, at the ABNC Tuam Street site I overheard a member of the public question, “Why are the council doing this? I thought the recovery stuff had been sorted already. I wonder why they’re asking us to think about public space of all things?” (ethnographic fieldnotes, 19/05/15)

These comments and attitudes did not always lead to (or represent) a kind of disengagement, however, but rather shaped perceptions of how these projects operated as sites of ethical and political responsibility – changing the dynamics of engagement itself. As opposed to early descriptions of transitional sites as “a middle finger to the government” (ABNC visitor, 5/05/15) and “a thought-provoking, polarised difference to all the destruction everywhere” (ABNC visitor, 12/05/15), users of the projects described the sites in different terms: as providing

“a bit of fun for once”, as “somewhere to go and relax” and “a bit of a different place to come and chill and hang with my friends” (ethnographic fieldnotes, GtR Places of Tranquillity, 29/03/15).

In working within state frameworks, it appeared that for many the spaces generated by these TSOs were no longer viewed as juxtaposed against the inactivity of the state. Rather it tended to be described as part of the broader ‘re-opening’ of the city-centre. This is not to suggest that conflation with state bodies had stripped these projects of political potential, but that the projects themselves were working in different ways – perhaps representing less of a decisive rupture/destabilisation of the political identity of the city and more of an affective atmosphere of anticipation that contrasted with the wider climates of frustration related to living in a quake-damaged city. Reflecting on this conflation between the council branding of the city and the activity of these TSOs, a member of the public told me at a Gap Filler Grandstandium event,

Straight after the earthquakes, these kind of things were the only things that you could do. That’s part of what made them so bloody awesome...Gap Filler had these absolutely amazing projects that got us back in here and made a statement about the recovery at the same time.

In those days people were asking big questions, you know...could we have a radically different city centre? Are the earthquakes going to jolt some sense into people? I think people have realised now that no, we’re not going to get that. What we’re going to get is essentially the same city, but maybe with some bits that are different, like this [referring to the event we were at]. So, naturally, my expectations have changed. Now I bring my dog instead of my Che Guevara hat! (Ruby, 23/03/15)

Subsequently, for some users the ‘muddying’ of the relationship between city-making TSOs and government recovery initiatives led to these projects becoming incredibly complex spaces of encounter. In these cases, engagements with these projects simultaneously served local/national state reassertion of control (in bringing citizens back into the central city to see the ‘innovative’ rebuild), engendered forms of political and ethical citizenship that challenged and (in some way) shaped the narratives of the city, and contributed to the building of

alternative affective atmospheres that emerged from the co-operative activity of citizens.

Subsequently, these shifting temporalities of engagement pointed towards the playing out of more complex engagements than narratives of a gradual co-option into the tenets of state recovery ideologies. Organisations were not simply co-opted into state reassertions of the status-quo and, despite the presence of public interpretations that the radical potential was declining, different kinds of ethical sensibility were still being fostered through these sites. Engagements with transitional projects were still innately laced with political potential. Participation in seemingly frivolous and mundane activities, even when not juxtaposed against the inactivity of state, provided people with situated encouragement to talk about their personal experiences of the earthquakes, re-engage with city-centre spaces and contribute to affective collectivities that work to develop wider ethical understandings and political awareness that might not otherwise be possible. The political potential here existed less in the shape of presenting a coherent and well-formed alternative to the 'conservative governmentality' in Christchurch, and instead manifested in dispositions and habits for 'proto-political longings for change' (Thrift, 2004, p. 69) that would otherwise remain beyond the realms of possibility.

Nevertheless, as also evident in the previous chapter with the case of CanCERN, the logics and strategies that probed the fissures generated by the earthquakes often remained hidden to service users. Despite these transitional projects and spaces serving both institutional ends (by engaging with governmental re-brandings of the city) and progressive ethical sensibilities (through discussions about how the future city might be performed), the relationships built with recovery agencies and global networks represented a perceived decline in radical potential. In this instance, whilst organisational fidelities might be observed in the efforts to carve open the possibilities rendered visible by the earthquakes, it is difficult to suggest that similar understandings of how the earthquakes ruptured the city were imparted upon those who engaged with their projects. As I have sought to demonstrate in this last section, although previously significant narratives of the city are being challenged as part of the summative fidelity to that event, the ways in which *these* projects are taking root in the renewal and re-

imagination of the city are marked by complex temporalities that shifted the dynamics of encounter.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined a set of emergent TSOs that made use of, and became recognisable in, the temporary activity-spaces of demolished areas of the Christchurch central city. In particular, it has explored how new logics of performative expression and ethical sensibility have emerged in material spaces created by the earthquakes, with a perceptible fidelity to the potential for interruptive and propositional thinking brought about by the earthquakes. These organisations, I have argued, have been working to challenge place-narratives in Christchurch, many of which have emerged from state-induced discourses of the need for large-scale anchor-projects in order to represent a functioning and recovered city.

Although frequently assumed to be temporary gap-fillers, destined to be overwritten more formal redevelopment, I argue that the organisations fostering these transitional activities are engaged in a far more significant process of weaving aspects of the temporary and the transitional into the re-emerging 'permanent' fabric of the city. This ongoing sense of being-in-transition within a rebuilt urban landscape is a direct consequence of a continuing fidelity to the event of the earthquakes. The projects, although the content varied amongst the participant organisations, often worked to re-stage the city, simultaneously counter-posing the surrounding landscape with reference to a capacity to be *engaged* and *experiment* that reflected the possibility of alternative horizons of being. At the same time, they were wrapped up in performative aesthetics of theatricality that generated senses of response-ability, but still left it to individual citizens to respond in their own ways.

Such attention has contributed to, and challenged, existing literatures that generally attach negative commentaries to emergent state-third-sector relationships. This chapter has highlighted, through intensive work with emergent city-making TSOs, that organisations demonstrated the capacity to extricate themselves from the tenets of neoliberalism in Christchurch. In particular, the discussion here has highlighted a number of ways in which participant TSOs have experimented with the dynamics of incorporation/resistance in ways that did not

find themselves essentially encroached by hegemonic rationalities and technologies. Such fissures, I argue, do not appear to be novel permeations of conservative or neoliberal ideology, but appeared to reflect the agency of organisations to manage their place in the recovery landscape. Whilst some may critique the willingness of these emergent TSOs to strike up relationships in the name of political legitimacy, my analysis has raised questions about how such movements simultaneously engendered spaces through which different visions and claims to the city might be imagined. This analysis has untied the false dichotomy where participation equals accommodative compromise, while resistance equals distance from the state. In this instance, city-making TSOs demonstrated an awareness of the institutional ends their projects were serving, and subsequently enacted movements that shifted their proximity to the state at various times.

In unpicking and examining these movements, I have sought to draw attention to the organisational practices and rationalities that represented different realisations and performances of fidelity – particularly to those presented in the previous chapter. In contrast to CanCERN, whose projects I argued demonstrated an acknowledgement of the opening and closing of post-quake spaces, these TSOs undertook efforts to carve open space for their existence and ethical dispositions in the recovering city. By focusing in on the ways these TSOs have worked to engrain themselves in the city, I have explored perceptions that the earthquakes presented only the conditions through which alternative practices of city-making might be imagined. Particularly, my attention to organisational practices revealed that transitional projects themselves only formed a part of attempts to remake a traumatised city. Participant TSOs were enacting attempts to continue and expand the rupture generated by the earthquakes on a range of registers and a range of scales. This analysis is important given that it reveals and highlights the multiple ways fidelity could be observed in the post-disaster landscape. My use of fidelity as a lens through which to examine emergent post-disaster behaviour has demonstrated the different ways organisational practices, sustained by emotionally charged improvisations, were shaped by a sense of what it meant to be consistent with the rupture of the status-quo.

Finally, this analysis raised a series of questions about how such fidelities were imparted on those who used them – or, at least, perhaps mediated individual performances of fidelity to the earthquakes. Nevertheless, organisational efforts to construct relationships with local and national state bodies inherently shaped how citizens engaged with transitional projects. These strategies and movements, whilst seen as contributing to the carving open of space for change, shaped the ways in which their projects were viewed as sites for the rousing of potential of transformation. The importance of this, in regards to existing literatures, is two-fold. Firstly, it raises questions about accounts of how neoliberal subjectivities assumingly develop within incorporated spaces – with my analysis pointing towards a situation where citizens were aware of the shifting radical potentialities of different initiatives in Christchurch. In a way, the changing use of these transitional projects, and the conscious observations of it, points towards a similar sort of extraction from the clutches of political subjectification as demonstrated by the participant TSOs. Secondly, it raises questions about the spaces of progressive political potential engendered by TSOs. In contributing to existing literatures on the ethical and political potential of the third-sector, this chapter (and thesis) has raised questions about how these progressive openings might actually result in the formation, or mediation, of alternative subjectivities within them.

The following chapter moves to synthesise the discussions presented in the preceding three chapters by reflecting on how they respond to the initial research questions.

Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

Through this thesis I have addressed the various ways individuals and TSOs realised and practiced fidelity to the earthquakes in Christchurch. I have argued that the rupture of the earthquake event created both material and imaginary space for rethinking and performing the city. Through an embodied and embedded research methodology – spent largely working within post-quake emergent TSOs – I have explored the how the earthquakes have represented a destabilisation of the taken-for-granted orthodoxy of the lived world, in turn allowing consideration of how being faithful to the event afforded opportunities for new performances and improvisations. My analysis of the creative subjectivities displayed post-quake demonstrated the strategies and rationalities that sought to foster and create radical and alternative subjects of the earthquakes – rationalities that were realised in contrasting and complex ways. With this in mind, each chapter in this thesis has been an attempt to make sense of an aspect of post-disaster life by understanding the ways in which these fidelities can be observed in practices during the recovery period in Christchurch. The discussion to date has illustrated that the earthquakes are therefore not just mappable moments, but occurrences that exist, endure and pervade as subjects demonstrate fidelity to them.

Here, I conclude with a critical analysis of how the findings of this thesis speak back to the debates that were outlined in the first half of this thesis. This chapter critically reflects on the methods that underpinned this study and raises questions about how this research might be integrated into future work. Firstly, however, this chapter begins by examining how the narratives of the last three empirically-focused chapters contribute to broader discussions about: fidelity as a geographical lens, the roles and activity of TSOs in the post-disaster landscape and the geographies of the Christchurch landscape.

1. The Geographies of Fidelity

This thesis has critically engaged with the philosophy of the 'event' to build a broader interpretation of the earthquakes as generating geophysical and sociocultural rifts that have released the capacity for alternative logics of knowing, being and doing to exist within the city. This framework of the event offers a different critical gesture of response to the earthquakes than established political and social narratives (much of which focuses on persistence and resilience). Through it I have argued that new forms of knowledge and subjectivity, including a potential for empowering that which previously was restricted to the backdrop of narratives and representations of the city, have emerged in response to the interruption concerned. Pertinently, I have argued that these emergences mean that the earthquakes landscape should be understood as something more complex than beginning with the earthquakes themselves, to be followed by post-event periods of recovery. Rather, the interruptions and ruptures generated by the earthquake event pervade in various capacities (and on various registers) – notably fuelled by improvisations that invoke a fidelity to that event.

In doing so, I have engaged with Badiou's philosophy of the event not as a rigid and systemic framework to give a prescribed sensibility to the Christchurch landscape, but as offering a series of critical gestures that pose different questions about what has irrupted into the city. Importantly, I have not argued that Badiou's theory of the event and fidelity presents a precise fit with what has happened after the earthquakes. Additionally, this thesis does not attempt to map Badiou's notion of 'the political' onto the Christchurch context. As I indicated in the introduction of this thesis, Badiou's refusal of any causal connection between social reality, political decision (and political history) and event makes it an unhelpful philosophy to deploy empirically (Hallward, 2003). As well as raising questions about what defines an event (including how we might actually observe it), a critique of the event philosophy is that it is simplistic in its presentation of a formalised and knowable picture of the emergence of a new reality/ordering of life to which people are somehow forcefully subject to.

In contrast, I have used this thesis to consider whether space exists to explore the concepts that underpin this philosophy in a way that more easily maps onto the messiness and complexities of empirical life. Here, I have argued that an

ongoing fidelity to the earthquakes has resulted in significant creative activity in Christchurch: drawing on an unthinking of the previous civic subject, a new sense of life and place, and a new imagination encouraged by practices that enable a temporary breaking free from bureaucracy and existing hierarchy. Underpinning this argument has been a series of questions that have sought to explore the various ways emergent subjects recognised or perceived the 'nature and potential' of the earthquakes, and how the activity of these subjects might be explored as staying true to these perceptions. Crucially, employing these gestures in this way offered a way of considering post-disaster behaviour not just as a response to the indeterminacy of response and recovery, but rather a moment where an exceptional egalitarian break from the previous hierarchy is perceived as possible (see also Cloke, Dickinson, & Tupper, 2017). In particular, what I have argued through this thesis is that thinking about fidelity in a more cautious way produces accounts of emergent subjectivity and knowledge and, when combined with embedded methodologies, enables exploration of how these subjectivities are actually arrived at. As I have subsequently demonstrated, the emergence of subjectivities and knowledge that exceed the realm of existing possibilities was by no means a uniform or coherent process – and perceptions of what it meant to stay true to the ruptures and rifts generated by the earthquakes were realised and performed in significantly different and often contested ways.

In this study, perceptions of exactly how the ruptures generated by the earthquakes represented the possibility for a break from the existing hierarchy were shaped by two distinct themes. Firstly, participants often described the *magnitude* of the rupture to the status quo – a perception that inherently shaped the enactment of alternative imaginations and politics of possibility, opening up lines of flight whilst simultaneously curbing others. For individual red-zoners, whose accounts were explored in Chapter Five, the ways in which the earthquakes revealed the injustices and limitations of the state formed the types of responses that were viewed as being in line with the nature of the event. Broadly, this saw the recognition that limitations of the state's preparation and response to the earthquakes, including attempts to generate forms of top-down place-making that characterised recovery efforts in the central city, denoted the earthquake as a form of political event. This belief was represented in the emergence of evolving aspirations that worked to generate new forms of, albeit

largely individual, political re-engagement in the city. For emergent TSOs, meanwhile, participants articulated a sense that the earthquake event provided the spatial, social and political componentry that conjured up the possibility for alternative urban futures. Performing fidelity to the event in these instances required the development of (and loyalty to) an awareness of the conditions that enabled their irruption – including developing a sense that the earthquakes ruptured life in distinct ways that lent to certain kinds of action over others.

Secondly, and connected to this last point, conceptualisations of how the earthquakes ruptured the status-quo shaped organisational practices and logics that hoped to embed traces of the event in the re-emerging normal of the city. For CanCERN, the earthquakes were viewed as opening up space for political and social experimentation that sought to work towards revealing and demonstrating the inefficiency, incompleteness and excessiveness of life under existing political and private-market regimes. Pertinently, the organisation demonstrated a belief that the mid-term recovery landscape represented a ‘time and place’ through which social, political and ethical change could be pushed for. This included the emergence of a complex recognition that the kinds of encounters generated through their projects with state recovery agencies and private market institutions would shape social and political life beyond the organisation. Fidelity, in these instances, was still observable in the failures, the push-backs and the ‘stop signs’ because staff were entwined within a complex and messy process of discovering the possibilities engendered by the event, and demonstrated an awareness that (in the face of these failures) space would open up elsewhere to embed their claims/projects. Perhaps most notably, and cutting against literatures that point towards the reassertion of political control, the closure of the organisation was guided by a sense that the earthquakes themselves opened and closed spaces through which they could push for change.

In contrast, I argued that the city-making organisations demonstrated fidelity in starkly other ways – pursuing the idea that the earthquakes only temporarily unleashed a sense of urban experimentation that both illuminated and responded to the ruptures caused by living in an earthquake zone. In these instances, remaining faithful to the earthquake event required, most simply, a more subjective allegiance to ideas that the earthquakes enabled the possibility for new urban conditions. Concentration of organisational efforts, then, focused on

carving open space for their projects and ethical dispositions to embed themselves in the new normal of the city. As I explored in Chapter Seven, transitional projects have evoked a desire to ensure that the temporary spirit in the city endured beyond the completion of the 'anchor project' blueprint, not in terms of making the projects themselves permanent, but rather as an enabling of the idea of experimental bottom-up city-building to prosper in amongst future phases of urban regeneration. The methods employed by organisations were multiple and varied, but sought to work on a range of registers. This included contributing to an affective shift in the city, working to leverage their popularity and citizen engagement to reshape relations with state bodies, and tapping into global conversations and movements. In these instances, the earthquakes were framed by city-making TSOs as a kind of violent and unexpected springboard through which the ephemeral and temporary experiments of social entrepreneurship could work to provoke longer-lasting traces of hope in a transitional imaginary.

Fidelity, in these accounts of organisational and individual life, both emanated from and constituted the 'gift' of the earthquakes. The notion of a gift, however, is not to assume that the earthquakes simply opened up positive and progressive response. Instead it was, in part, the pain of the disaster that generated spaces of response. Specifically, the cracks presented by the earthquakes generated not only spaces of response to the sledgehammer of formal political action and narrative, but to the notion that the painful deconstruction of the city and its representations demanded the production of a 'new Christchurch'.

The acknowledgement that the earthquakes would result in a city whose material and social landscape would be irrevocably changed in part demanded that, any subject who sought to contribute to this change, demonstrate a fidelity to the nature and potential of the event. Interestingly, the narrative in the previous chapters suggest that however materially evident the disaster might have been, they were interpreted, measured and projected in different ways and sites. This, in turn, points at a paradoxical condition of the Christchurch landscape: while the collapse of the world required building it anew, it also gave rise to modes of experimentation that inevitably produced heterogenous worldings and, in turn, contestations (see also Tironi, 2015). For example, CanCERN's emergence in part reflected a response to the disempowering inability for citizens to make a

contribution to the rebuild, but also the perspective that community needed to contribute to the in the longer-term processes of re-imagining, planning and re-building an irrevocably changed city – perspectives that produced contestations with both institutional bodies and public citizens who were also demonstrating their own fidelities to the earthquakes.

Moreover, these perceived fidelities subsequently also gave meaning to the event itself, in part based on understandings and interpretations of what the rupture to the status quo represented in the ongoing narratives of the city. As Dewsbury (2007) has argued, moments and ruptures only become events through the performance of fidelity post their taking place; thus the politics rests in whether subjects align themselves with how the event converges to produce new conditions of truth. In this vein, I have examined the methods and practices through which fidelity sought to move the earthquakes from a point of possible change to a moment that defined a significant shift in the city. As this thesis has argued, the material dimensions of this shift might be obvious (the earthquakes mark an obviously provable, visible geophysical event), however the social, political and cultural dynamics of this shift were less so. In particular, whilst their methods and perspective ultimately differed, the case studies of CanCERN and the city-making organisations revealed practices of tentative probing that sought to embed and normalise the conditions that enabled their emergence. Whilst this was perhaps most obvious in attempts to establish an ongoing sense of being in-transition by the city-making TSOs, the fidelity through which these subjects acted in relation to the event took the earthquakes from something destructive to something that was hoped to be continually generative. Here, in a vein similar to that argued by Mould (2009), fidelity became a sort of 'energy' that fuelled access to creative alterity in the urban landscape – a commitment that concurrently defined the repercussions of the earthquakes themselves.

2. The Geographies of TSOs and the Post-Disaster Context

This thesis has demonstrated that emergent TSOs have occupied complex spaces within the disaster recovery landscape in Christchurch. In Chapter Two, I identified the negative commentaries normatively attached to emergent state and third-sector relationships – with significant emphasis on how TSOs are forcefully co-opted into various political ideologies. Such orthodoxies, I argued, could also be found in post-disaster literatures that point towards TSOs being pushed out of

recovery strategies as the mid-term recovery period progresses. In response, this thesis has worked to complicate the story of one-sided co-option or political legitimisation that serves an automatic return to the conservative status quo. The reassertion of neoliberal goals and practices undoubtedly forms a highly significant part of the post-earthquakes narrative in Christchurch, representing for many a closure of the rupture and a reassertion of the pre-existing political-economic and symbolic order. However, part of my analysis here has highlighted that, alongside attempts to retain aspects of 'conservative Christchurch' in its re-emerging infrastructure, that alternative logics of knowing, being and doing have been enlivened post-quake. These alternative logics have released a capacity for alternative narrations of, and engagements within, the city through emergent TSOs. Most notably, this discussion has contributed to the development of two strands of literature:

State and Third-Sector Relationships

I have argued that reading the ecology of Christchurch in a manner that is sensitive to the fidelity of the earthquakes event has fostered a more nuanced recognition of the practices and performativities that make-up relationships with the state post-quake. In particular, this thesis has taken issue with accounts of TSOs that have typically positioned them as willing or unwilling victims who are caught up in the neoliberal incorporation of emergent community resources. Rather than assuming that neoliberal governance, or any particular political ideology, is automatically reflected through its engagement and incorporation of the third-sector, I have argued that the reality is often far more complex. Within conventional analytics of neoliberalism and the third-sector, the normative framing of TSOs relies on a false dichotomy in which participation equals accommodative compromise, whilst resistance must equals non-involvement with the state (see Williams, Goodwin, & Cloke, 2014). Yet, as this thesis has demonstrated, these accounts run the risk of dismissing how subjects grasp the opportunities at hand to work interstitially towards progressive ends – resulting in a potential ignorance of the opening and closing of spaces of progressive political potential (see also May & Cloke, 2014).

Conceptually, the explorations of third-sector behaviour in this thesis call for a shifting mode of attentiveness that enables interpretation of state-third-sector

relationships as something more intricate than predetermined and unidirectional in power. Whilst emerging sets of literature have sought to paint the third-sector as engendering spaces of political possibility (see Featherstone et al., 2012), even these accounts assume that strategic and subversive practices emerge as a result of state-dictated spaces and relationships. In these accounts, the politics of possibility in the third-sector are largely reactive. What I have sought to illustrate in this thesis is one such landscape where such organisations are actively contributing to the ongoing construction of relationships with state and private market bodies. Here, projects, rationalities, positions and procedures were constantly being negotiated by actors each with their own fidelities and visions for the establishment of a new normal in Christchurch. Specifically in this instance, the ‘playing up’ of access to community and the desire to rebrand the city as progressive and innovative in the face of destruction by emergent TSOs paints a more complex process of institutional relationship-building than previously documented in accounts of post-disaster life.

In doing so, this thesis has blurred the lines of the insider versus outsider TSOs painted by literatures that trace the more hopeful possibilities emerging through the third-sector. A part of the framework for this thesis consisted of building upon accounts of political activism in the third-sector that drew attention towards emergent political and ethical sensibilities that work strategically within and outside of the ‘neoliberal canvas’ (see Wills, 2016). Normatively, these accounts have contended that academic endeavour has underestimated the progressive possibilities for creating new ethical and political spaces within seemingly regressive political ideologies (Williams et al., 2014). My research, however, suggests that these forms of empirical experimentation within the third-sector that might foster alternative and radical subjectivities can involve the formation of more complex and multiple positionalities. A significant part of my analysis has sought to unpick the (re)assembling of third-sector-state relations after the earthquakes – with the argument that organisations demonstrated the capacity to move, relatively fluidly, within and outside of state projects and spaces.

For example, this thesis suggests a number of ways in which participant TSOs experimented with the dynamics of incorporation/resistance in order to achieve distinct organisational ends. In both Chapters Six and Seven, emergent TSOs demonstrated quite deliberate attempts to rework and shape institutional

practices, with CanCERN often leveraging their position as a 'community organisation' to publically critique state recovery and response strategies. Whilst the city-making organisations could be described as toeing this line a little more cautiously, their projects (even when in collaboration with local council or the CCDU) often provocatively counter-posed surrounding political urban developments. Here, these organisations appeared to discursively and strategically emphasise relationships with institutional bodies to achieve specific project goals – often either playing up council involvement to further embed themselves in the longer term process of urban planning, or embarking on autonomous projects that sought to provoke more deliberate critique of state responses (for example, Gap Filler's Grandstandium and Retro Sports Facility). Whilst the nature of the post-disaster landscape inherently shaped these movements and associated capacities in some ways, this analysis demonstrates a picture empirical experimentation grounded in something more complex than 'inside' or 'outside'.

Importantly, however, and despite a framework of analysis that shifts discussion away from situated positions of overwhelming compromise and resistance, accounts from local citizens raise interesting questions about the ways that these discourses pervade both academic and everyday landscapes. In thinking about the relationships between third-sector activity and shifting political ideologies, this thesis has critically questioned accounts of neoliberalism. In particular, it questioned the assumption that various styles of governance mechanically 'interpellate' and 'hail' new subjects into existence. As Barnett (2005) argues, the prevalent interpretation of governmentality compounds this problem, generally through a supposition that the implied subject-effects of programmes of rule are either automatically realised, or somehow successfully 'resisted'. The implication here is that whatever consists 'the social' is generally perceived as a residual effect of hegemonic ideological endeavours and/or governmental rationalities (see also Barnett et al., 2008). In response, I posed a series of questions about the ways in which TSO practices and projects shaped and mediated subjectivities post-quake – offering a deliberate sense of connection to the transgressive potential of the rupture of the event. In doing so, I contended that critical questions remained about the various ranges of agency where emergent organisations might produce and mediate something other than what is expected.

Despite drawing attention to the practices and strategies through which TSOs worked to carve open spaces of alterity, participant organisations faced significant public backlash and disengagement. For many in Christchurch, it appeared that organisational efforts to forge relationships with state bodies represented a return to the pre-existing political-economic and symbolic order. In the case of CanCERN (Chapter Six), their rationale to front a hub space that occupied both CERA/EQA agencies and insurance companies was viewed as the employment of a community agency to mop up the 'problematic' and hard-to-reach cases. The Breakthrough initiative attracted similar criticisms, and the quotes that open this thesis demonstrate one example (of many) where the organisation was heavily critiqued with closing down opportunities for 'real change'. In these instances, these initiatives worked to make progress for individuals and their barriers to recovery, but were simultaneously viewed as justifying state recovery methods and ideologies. Similarly, the city-making organisations were critiqued for their 'hopping on board' with local council and CERA/CCDU. In these cases, citizens that I encountered tended to describe a changing radicalness of engagement – where the initial projects and spaces (that offered a release of community empowerment and potential) transitioned into commodified spaces of Creativity when presented in conjunction with local/national state agencies. Here, participants spoke of either disengagement or the changing use of projects and attached criticism to these TSOs as placing financial security over the prospect of radical change.

These perceptions worked powerfully to shape the impact of these organisations and their projects. Whilst this thesis has contributed to literatures that explore new energies and lines of flight evidenced in emergent TSO activity, this research calls for accounts of the third-sector to pay closer attention to the subjectivities these organisations engender. For those affected by the earthquakes, the agency of organisations to work within and outside of state spaces were not viewed as genuinely progressive, but rather as representing the gradual closing of possibility for radically different urban futures. This is not to suggest that these TSOs failed in their endeavours. CanCERN undeniably achieved positive outcomes for many facing welfare and recovery issues. The city-making organisations enabled engagement with the CBD and opened up conversations about the future of the city. These organisations have been involved with, and

inconvertibly contributed to, serious attempt to embed hope in a city characterised by trauma and anxiety. For many I encountered during my time within these organisations, the priority lay in finding the ability to cope with the demands of post-disaster life. It is difficult to argue that these TSOs did not contribute to this in some way.

Complex Temporalities of Disaster Recovery

This thesis has also highlighted the complex temporal geographies running through the city of Christchurch. As I discussed in Chapter Three, although post-disaster landscapes are generally marked by a loss of sense, the processes that make up response and recovery are often defined in temporal ways. In the case of emergent community and spirits of altruism, Solnit (2009) contends that disasters often generate new possibilities for social and political life as reality becomes 'unworlded' by the violence of the earth. Such opportunities, however, are generally seen as unachievable possibilities. As Solnit reflect, disasters "...offer a glimpse. But the challenge [lays in] somehow making something of it" (p 307). In the case of emergent TSOs, the dominant narrative is that either the creative potential of these organisations diminishes or the organisations cease to exist as the state works to restore 'normality' (Drabek & McEntire, 2003; Saunders & Kreps, 1987). In these instances the very 'gift' of the disaster than Blanchot (1995) writes about appears either temporary or heavily skewed towards those with the structural capacity to generate powerful narratives about how the disaster fits in within ongoing storylines of the landscape.

However, the discussion in this thesis has worked to question, or at least complicate, these temporal narratives. It raises significant questions about how future work might focus on the various ways, and the different scales, that extreme events pervade the landscape. Chapters Five, Six and Seven demonstrated both individual and organisational perceptions that their activity would contribute to the earthquakes in enduring in different ways. For red-zone households, many described the ways in which the earthquakes (and the state response to them – including narratives of what it meant to be 'resilient') prompted different forms of political engagement in the city. Whilst these may not have been inherently earthquake orientated – take, for example, the participant who joined a local school PTA – the perceived institutionalised discourses of the earthquakes

provoked individual performances of fidelity. These served to both subvert these discourses and enabled the earthquakes to endure and live on in the landscape, albeit perhaps in less obvious ways.

The cases of the emergent TSOs in this thesis also raised questions about overarching narratives that point towards the gradual reinstatement of the status-quo as recovery progresses. Each organisation in this study demonstrated that they were unravelling complex temporalities that sought to extend beyond actual participants, and in doing so become something which can be apprehended in different ways across the city. For CanCERN, a faithfulness to the earthquake event was reflected in an organisational understanding of a 'time and place' through which they could contribute to the make-up of the new city. This included a belief that encounters with both state/private market bodies and citizens shaped the landscape beyond the existence of initiatives themselves – reflected both in shifts in structures of feeling across the city and in more material recognitions of how political bodies might engage with community agencies. The organisation's closure in 2015, then, was not a failure of resilience or expiration of need, but a realisation that the earthquakes had ruptured the city in distinct ways – resulting in an allegiance to the rupture that shaped both existence and activity. On the other hand, the city-making organisations articulated a sense that acting small/thinking big recognised and carved out spatial gaps of self-determination, temporal gaps for temporary experimentation and political gaps of possibility for social inclusivity in the city. Although many of their projects themselves are of short temporal duration, the propositional and experimental process that underlies them is one designed to endure. The recovery landscape, for these TSOs then, involved making a claim on the future city through experimenting with and embodying the use of temporary urban sites – with significant organisational effort given to carving out space for these temporary/'transitional' projects to become a more lasting and sustainable facet of the emerging city.

The complex temporalities highlighted here do not necessarily cast to one side narratives of a return to the pre-quake status-quo. Indeed, as already highlighted in this chapter, discourses of co-option into state recovery ideologies saw shifts in public participation in organisational projects. Despite an attentiveness towards the strategies of emergent organisations, their projects were generally viewed as representing a decline in radical and creative

potential. Nevertheless, they raise questions about the temporalities that might be explored through closer attention to the micro-spatialities of the disaster. Even, in this instance, if the earthquakes do not result in messianic change, the disaster itself pervades both the physical and socio-cultural landscapes in complex and emotional ways. As I have argued through this thesis, reading the ecology of Christchurch things in a manner that is sensitive to the fidelity of the earthquakes event, then, fosters a recognition of practices, rationalities and strategies that ensure the possibility of the earthquake event continues – fuelled by emergent subjectivities that reflect an ongoing fidelity to the possibilities afforded by the rupture.

3. The Geographies of Christchurch

Lastly, this thesis has contributed to a rereading of the earthquake landscape in Christchurch. It has made a number of contributions to existing (geographies of the third-sector, neoliberalism, post-disaster recovery) and emergent/shifting (progressive political possibilities in the third-sector, fidelity as a conceptual and empirical lens) literatures. However, empirically, this research has also worked to map out the trajectories of individual and collective behaviour that are emanating from the ruptures generated by the earthquakes in Christchurch. In this thesis I have deliberately eschewed or unpicked media and academic accounts of post-quake life in the city – accounts that have broadly focused on emergent practices of resilience and accounts of post-quake governmentality – in favour of an approach that seeks out the more complex geographies at play, largely in organisational spaces. This research has questioned, what I argue to be, dominant tropes of the earthquakes and has argued that they don't capture the assembly of affective, emotional and material responses to the disaster.

In doing so, I have posed a different set of questions – facilitating further exploration of the complexities of post-disaster behaviours and allowing consideration of how being faithful to the earthquakes afforded opportunities for different performances and improvisations. The lens of this thesis has offered a way of considering emergent behaviours not just as a response to a particular moment in time, but rather as part of a destabilisation of the taken-for-granted representations of Christchurch, through which repressed visions for what is seen to be at 'home' in the city can be realised (see also Cloke et al., 2017). Most blatantly, the examinations of these behaviours and rationalities have

worked to reveal and complicate discourses that emergent TSOs have been stripped of radical political potential. At the very least, this thesis has served to demonstrate the spaces in the city through which alternative imaginations are being contested on a day-to-day basis.

As such, this thesis raises a bigger question about the ways in which these fidelities and practices might prevail in the future of the city. Admittedly, the question of what the 'new Christchurch' will consist of have already been asked for a number of years (Nowland-Foreman, 2011). However, in addition to the broader responses that appear to consist of responses to these questions, this thesis has used empirical evidence from different post-quake trajectories to illustrate how alternative possibilities and new imaginations might be rendered visible in different contexts. This has ethical considerations (for example, in asking the researcher to consider the ways in which complex emotional landscapes pervade and persist), methodological considerations (asking the researcher to find ways of immersing themselves in the context) and ontological considerations (asking the researcher to consider how particular tropes, narratives, representations and meanings come into being). These kinds of questions and immersive explorations are crucial in understanding the socio-cultural geographies that are emerging in Christchurch as part of the ongoing event of the earthquakes.

8.2 Critical Reflections on Researching Disaster Landscapes

Having assimilated the key findings of this thesis in the previous section, I now offer some points of reflection in relation my experiences of conducting the research. Here, I focus on three issues that shaped and emerged from the research process by identifying how they speak back to existing literatures: my shifting proximities within the landscape; the implications of pursuing an immersion driven methodology in disaster a landscape; and the empirical implications/tensions of working for participant organisations.

Geographers have long been interested in the ways in which research proximity and situatedness shapes the research process and the narrative produced. In this instance, I reflected on how this project emerged not just from my position as an earthquake-affected citizen, but also how this research reflected, in part, a personal fidelity to the nature and potential of the earthquakes. Notably, this

included a desire to generate attentiveness towards how overarching narratives of the earthquakes didn't necessarily capture the complexity of life 'on the ground'. Whilst this situatedness risks a critique about the lens through which I made sense of behaviour, I argued that it was such proximity and fidelity that permitted me to open up discussions during my fieldwork. My position as an earthquake-affected citizen and, in many instances, user of emergent TSOs enabled participants to be more receptive about deconstructing associations between their projects and top-down recovery ideologies (as well as opening up more direct conversations about the attempted reshaping and subversion of state recovery projects). This thereby enabled the construction of an account that brought together broader narratives of earthquake response/recovery and more detailed strategic and ethical responses from within organisations.

Additionally, I have used this thesis to examine the shifting proximities that shaped the research process. Despite being a citizen of the earthquakes, this project has emerged from movement between Christchurch and Exeter. Although these movements were difficult in their own right, I have argued that this research has been marked by shifting proximities – both through movements within and outside of participant organisations and also the country – that enabled dominant narratives of the earthquakes to be both realised and challenged. This has resulted in the capacity to make sense of connections and disconnections between broader discourses and the micro-geographies of the disaster event – including an emergent capacity to write about the emotional landscapes of the disaster that would not have been possible otherwise. Such work stresses the need for future academic endeavour to reflect on not just the limitations of moving inside and outside of research landscapes, but also the perspectives that such movements offer up.

Secondly, in this thesis I have attempted to employ methods that recognise and embrace the complex emotional and affective blankets that envelop the city of Christchurch. The preceding analysis has emphasised that the real conditions of the disaster (and its response) are significantly conveyed and experienced through multiple collective affects that produce particular atmospheres that are part and parcel of the socio-cultural geographies of disaster events. Moreover, these affective atmospheres manifest materially, socially and emotionally in complex and unforeseen ways. In this instance, there is no fixed meaning

attached to a disaster nor is there a solely identifiable structure of feeling across the city. Neither can you search for a 'geography of the disaster'. Instead, the disaster consists of complex, uneven, indeterminable and often inarticulable (for those living within it) emotional responses that both emerge from and feed into what a participant termed "a swirling mass of stuff" in Christchurch. The methodological concern here is to consider in future approaches that enable exploration of these geographies that do not rely on a truncated range of expressions of the disaster. Instead, as I have attempted to do through this research, these complex geographies suggest a need for methodologies that remain open to possibility for unexpected and impromptu encounters that work to enable (an albeit always limited) cognisance of the affective and emotional landscapes that ensue post-event.

Thirdly, in researching the emergent and experimental spaces of fidelity in Christchurch, I have pursued an immersion style methodology that saw me working within participant organisations. In addition to the usefulness of this in relation to the research interests, this decision was also driven as an ethical response to discourses of over-research. On one hand, these immersive takes on participant observation enabled the challenging of dominant narratives of organisational co-option through attentiveness towards organisational practices, strategies and rationalities that performatively probed the possibilities of the event. Such attention, for example, revealed that these practices, projects and fidelities are always in the process of assembly and are inherently shaped by both organisational failures and successes. On the other hand, the desire to work for participant organisations was at times problematic. The different projects and organisational practices of CanCERN and the city-making TSOs made the decision to 'work for' difficult to carry out in the field – with the shifting nature of the recovery landscape and the organisations themselves making it unfeasible to replicate similar working relationships across participant TSOs. Additionally, the decision to conduct intensive research with these organisations raised significant issues around the perceived tapping up of TSOs as well as raising concerns around representation. My placement within CanCERN, for example, raised tensions over my role as a researcher (and thus, self-interest) versus organisational representative (and the ethics of care this entailed).

8.3 Rethinking Research and the Politics of the Event

In concluding this research, it is also important to consider the questions that are raised as a result, as well as the avenues less explored. My research has opened up discussion that might enliven and contribute to debates not just about third-sector and state relations but also the longer-term make-up of emergent material, political and social spaces after disasters.

Emergent Spaces of Political Possibility

My research has emphasised the need to further explore and unpick the current shortcomings of vocabularies of response to neoliberal governmentality – particularly in relation to the spaces opened up through the third-sector. As I identified early in this thesis, work is emerging that seeks to identify the progressive political possibilities that are emerging in third-sector spaces, and the subsequent subjectivities that engagements with these spaces offer. However, such stringent positionalities (that imbue TSOs with either the capacity to conform or subvert neoliberal expectations) run the risk of structuring thought in such a way that political action can only ever be theorised in terms of re-active behaviour.

Although the notion of a ‘third-sector’ encapsulates a large range of organisations, activities and rationalities, recent research is beginning to ask questions about the kinds of methodologies and forms of attentiveness that might render visible the logics and processes at work within the sector. This thesis has sought to highlight that these logics work not only at a procedural level, but also on the territories of the personal, the affective and the material. The attentiveness in this thesis towards the strategies, experimentations and fidelities that shape relationships with state and private market bodies highlights the need to further examine the latent spaces of possibility that are opening up through both human and non-human (later discussed) re-orderings of social life. As this thesis has demonstrated, this does not suggest that the ethical agency demonstrated by participants in Christchurch suggests progressive outcomes will always be possible, but that spaces of political possibility are constantly in flux – particularly given that the roll-out of ideological projects are neither complete, uniform nor hegemonic.

Following this, more research is needed to explore the kinds of subjectivities that are shaped and mediated through third-sector engagement. If we are to acknowledge that these kinds of organisations are undertaking forms of empirical experimentation, employing logics that cut against what is expected, how do these practices connect up with cultural processes of self-formation and subjectivity? As Barnett notes, analytics of governmentality alone often cannot account for relationships between action, identity and subjectivity. With emergent bodies of work paying attention to the spaces that foster logics that run counter to and outside of political projects, subjectivity is no longer able to be simply reduced to the operation of subjection to the state. Building on the work in Chapters Six and Seven, where local citizens described the changing association and dissociations with TSOs representing political critiques in themselves, significant questions remain as to how peoples' sense of themselves is mediated and expressed through the third-sector.

Non-Human Agency and Disasters

This thesis has noted how the agency demonstrated by post-quake subjects in Christchurch (including lack thereof) is a part of larger material flows, exchanges, and interactions. For participants in this research, the capacity and nature of response was in part dictated and shaped by human reaction to the disaster, but also intrinsically entwined with a broader spectrum of non-human agencies that enabled the expressing and enactment of unforeseeable trajectories of life. Indeed, to speak of the earthquakes as releasing the capacity for new narrations of social life is to also to refer to the injection of a certain vitality from something other than human. As Pearson (2015) acknowledges, seemingly emergent patterns of behaviour need to be treated as properties that materialise in unpredictable and uneven relationships with a host of non-human agencies.

The focus on fidelity in this thesis is but one way to explore and make sense of how new worlds are being made. As I have already alluded to, the earthquakes have given rise to the complex co-existence of fidelity and pain. The practices and strategies that have been drawn out in this thesis are enabled, in part, to the pain and destruction generated by the earthquakes. Certainly, the context of Christchurch could be fruitfully explored through the ways in which this pain and

destruction enables the world to be made anew in different ways. Whilst these complex relationships have undoubtedly sat behind my analysis in this this thesis, it's been difficult to give non-human agency full credit or attention within the narrative. As already touched upon in this chapter, the situatedness of the researcher shapes the kinds of ideas that are written about. In this instance, to write about the ways in which we are interred by the earth (or whatever else) felt secondary and ethically questionable, given the emotional landscapes of the city. Given the meaning that I had attached to the earthquakes, and my proximity to the landscape, at the beginning of this project it would not have been possible.

Subsequently, my research points to further questions about the range of non-human agencies that might be at play in Christchurch: in what ways are our endeavours, our responses to the rifts generated by the earthquakes, utterly reliant on the worlds that are being constructed by 'others'? In what ways are the 'progressive' lines of flight that irrupt from the destruction enabled by conditions that aren't of our own making? How does the attribution of agency to the non-human shape what it means to be faithful to the disaster event?

Longer-Term Temporalities

As addressed earlier in this chapter, the Christchurch landscape is marked by complex and shifting temporalities. Even though this project began in what might be called the 'mid-term recovery' period, it raises questions about the longer term nature of the earthquake event. As I have drawn attention to, the series of temporary practices prompted by individuals and TSOs exist to contribute to a re-coding of the city so as to ensure a longer-lasting place for such thinking in the new 'normal' of the city. It remains to be seen, however, the longer-lasting impacts of these irruptions of new senses of life and place. Whilst this research indicates that the roles of these emergent organisations have subsisted beyond expectations generated from previous disaster work, it is difficult – in the midst of a city that is still materially and emotionally devastated – to denote what ideas, ethics and projects will prosper in amongst future phases of urban and political regeneration.

At the current time, it is impossible to tell if the earthquakes represent a strange permutation of the existing status-quo, an effect of a different situation¹²², or simply an anomaly that serves to strengthen the existing hierarchy. Although my analysis demonstrated that the earthquakes gave momentum to formerly repressed and tempered social concerns, we are still trapped in the immediacy of the earthquakes and therefore unable to examine whether such practices and possibilities are tonal blips in the landscape, or represent something more. In this vein, future work might build off this research and pay attention to the scales through which the ruptures of the earthquake have reverberated through the landscape over time and on different scales. Whilst some of these are intended to contribute to broader cultural shifts in the city, the successes and failure of such fidelities to embed themselves in the 'new' should be explored in more micro ways. Ruptures to the status quo, after all, are rarely messianic in nature.

8.3 Endword

Through analysis of the ways that a series of earthquakes in Christchurch, New Zealand in 2010-11 ruptured the city, I have explored the ways that subjects have demonstrated fidelity to that event. Recognising emergent TSOs as one manifestation of an irruption from the rupture generated by the earthquake event, particular consideration has been given to the complex practices and performativities that make up their activity during the mid-term recovery period. In doing so, I have added nuance and complexity to the ideas that these emergent organisations have simply become pseudo-governmental bodies that become wrapped up in the reproduction and entrenchment of the seemingly 'impossible to break' status-quo.

In offering a geographical account of the idea of fidelity, I have explored and examined organisational perceptions of their roles in the recovery landscape – including an attentiveness towards the practices that represent a more subjective allegiance to the alternative possibilities engendered by the earthquakes. As teased out within the empirical chapters of this thesis, these allegiances were realised in complex and contrasting ways and were reflected in projects and

¹²² For example, building off momentum generated by interconnected social movements formed in response to neoliberalism or the uncertainties of the Anthropocene.

performativities that sought to stay 'in line' with the nature and potential of the event.

As I have summarised in this concluding chapter, whilst organisational practices reveal attempts to convert grasps of the temporary and transitional into more visionary forms of longer-lasting change, engagements with citizens revealed a sense of declining radical potential. Resultantly, questions remain about the extent to which these experimentations have contributed to a longer-lasting fidelity to the earthquake event. Despite this, in a climate of uncertainty and unknowable outcomes, it is undeniable that the emergent third-sector provided one route to making sense of, and participating in, the recovery of the city.

Appendices

Appendix One: Table of red-zone interviewees

Southshore Red-Zone Interview Record ¹²³			
<i>Number</i>	<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Location/type of Interview</i>
1	Helen	9/02/15	Face-to-face, participant's home
2	Peter	10/02/15	Face-to-face, participant's home
3	Chrissy	13/02/15	Phone interview
4	Brian	13/02/15	Face-to-face, participant's home
5	Margaret	26/02/15	Face-to-face, participant's home
6	Karen	27/02/15	Phone interview
7	Edith	2/03/15	Face-to-face, participant's home
8	Sarah	2/03/15	Face-to-face, participant's home
9	Daniel	3/03/15	Face-to-face, participant's home
10	Pete	6/03/15	Face-to-face, participant's home
11	Donna	23/03/15	Phone interview
12	Julie	24/03/15	Phone interview
13	Andrew	7/04/15	Face-to-face, participant's home
14	Claude	7/04/15	Phone interview

¹²³ For interviews conducted during PhD research. In-text, some narrative is used from interviews conducted during my Masters research. Where relevant, this is noted.

Appendix Two: Table of TSO and Individual Interviews

TSO and Individual Interviews (see extensive research phase)			
<i>Number</i>	<i>Organisation/Individual</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Location/type of Interview</i>
1	City Mission	11/11/14	Face-to-face, café
2	Steven	11/12/14	Face-to-face, café. Head of local residents association
3	Stephanie	13/12/14	Face-to-face, café. Local researcher
4	WeCAN	29/01/15	Phone
5	Council of Social Services	02/02/15	Face-to-face, on workplace site
6	CanCERN	24/02/15	Face-to-face, café
7	The Salvation Army	06/03/15	Face-to-face, on workplace site
8	Danielle	9/03/15	Face-to-face, café. Interviewed with PC. Local academic
9	Kathryn	11/03/15	Face-to-face, café.
10	Greening the Rubble	11/03/15	Face-to-face, on workplace site
11	Life in Vacant Space	11/03/15	Face-to-face, on workplace site
12	Gap Filler	12/03/15	Face-to-face, on workplace site
13	A Brave New City	20/03/15	Face-to-face, café
14	One Voice Te Reo Kotahi	20/03/15	Phone
15	Ministry of Awesome	27/03/15	Face-to-face, on workplace site
16	New Life	06/04/15	Face-to-face, café
17	Greenfield Community Support	27/04/15	Face-to-face, on workplace site
18	Red Cross	27/04/15	Face-to-face, café

Appendix Three: Table of observational work within TSOs

TSO Observation Work (see case studies two and three in Chapter Four)		
<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Date/s</i>	<i>Event/type of work</i>
A Brave New City	28/03/15 5/05/15 12/05/15 19/05/15	Central city market (ABNC stall) Tuam Street site observation Tuam Street site observation Tuam Street site observation
Gap Filler	13/02/15 16/03/15 23/03/15 30/03/15 8/06/15 09/06/15 09/06/15 10/05/15 31/07/15	Retro Sports Facility – ‘French Cricket World Cup Final’ Grandstandium Event (Eyes on the City – boxed Quarter site discussion) Grandstandium Event (Eyes on the City – Tuam/Madras intersection – cycling and Innovation precinct discussion) Grandstandium Event (Eyes on the City – Hereford Street – Arts Centre discussion) The Commons observational work Dance-O-Mat ‘geriatric’ event The Commons observational work The Commons observational work The Commons observational work
Greening the Rubble	21/03/15 28/03/15 03/04/15 04/04/15 1/08/15	Sound Garden 2.0 launch event Places of Tranquillity event Colombo Street urban park observational work Colombo Street urban park observational work Kua Hua Ake Te Ao café launch event
Ministry of Awesome	02/06/15 09/06/15 16/06/15	Coffee & Jam Activator Session Coffee & Jam Activator Session Coffee & Jam Activator Session

	23/06/15	Coffee & Jam Activator Session
CanCERN	February to September 2015	<p>Working for the ItK Hub as community host:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Every Thursday from April 23th until September. - In August & September: three-four days a week (generally Mon, Tue & Thur). - Discursive extra days throughout this period. <p>Total: approximately 400 hours (including training).</p>

Appendix Four: Overview of interviewed participants

Organisation Name (pseudonyms are in italics)		Description	Existed prior to the September 2010 earthquake?
	The Salvation Army	Large, international Christian social service provider. Offered financial and material support during earthquake recovery. Focus on extension of existing organisational aims post-quake.	✓
	City Mission	Christian social service agency with emphasis on drug/alcohol support and emergency housing.	✓
	Red Cross	International humanitarian organisation. Focus in Christchurch on immediate relief and funding of longer-term 'community resilience' programmes. Largest TS source of recovery funds post-quake.	✓
	<i>New Life</i>	Christian network of churches that emerged to collectively address unmet needs post-quake. Focus on vulnerable populations, but also involved in local politics (represented at council meetings).	✓
	<i>Greenfield Support</i> <i>Community</i>	Christian community-based organisation, orientated towards elderly and those with disability. Contracted by state to provide emergency services (food/migrant support) and 'soft' services (budgeting advice).	✓

One Voice Te Reo Kotahi	An independent network that seeks to support and promote the TS in Christchurch. Aims to promote communication with government and commerce for sector as a whole.
WeCAN	Seeks to publicly highlight injustices and issues affecting residents following the Canterbury earthquakes. Legal focus, with aims to improve human rights legislations. Sought to mobilise discord against government/private market.
Greening the Rubble	Creates and maintains temporary public parks on demolition sites in city. Promotes engagement around issues of urban design and sustainability more broadly.
Life in Vacant Spaces	Works as an umbrella organisation for groups like GtR and GF by managing private owned property for creative, political and commercial temporary uses of land. Markets itself as doing the 'red tape' so that other projects/engagements can spring up.
Ministry of Awesome	Focused on prompting engagements with the city with emphasis on entrepreneurship. Runs events that aim to connect different forms of 'social innovators'.
Gap Filler	A creative urban regeneration initiative that facilitates a wide range of temporary projects, events, installations and amenities in the city. Focus on experimentation and community participation.

CanCERN	Network of Residents Association and Community Group representatives from the neighbourhoods of Canterbury.
	Residential recovery focus, but more about opening up lines of communication with government/private market.
Council of Social Services	Independent network focused on providing opportunities and training to support the 'non-profit' sector in Christchurch
A Brave New City	A public engagement organisation designed to re-engage citizens of Christchurch in discussions of what the future city might look like. Sought to link recovery issues with broader discourses (e.g. sustainability).

Organisation/Individual Name (pseudonyms are in italics)	Description
<i>Steven</i> (head of local residents association)	The head of a residents association in the area of the red-zone study. Also completing research around role of residential networks in disaster recovery.
<i>Danielle</i> (Local academic)	A local academic interested in the third-sector and conceptualisations of community resilience post-quake
<i>Stephanie</i> (Local academic)	A local academic conducting research on efficacy of local council responses to the earthquakes. Also conducting red-zone research on behalf of a national TSO
<i>Kathryn</i> (Local author)	A well-known local figure who published a book about the role of churches in the recovery

Appendix Five: Example of a completed ItK Hub visitor form

These forms were required to be filled in after every engagement with a member of public. Sections have been removed (in order to hide identifying information)

Issues:			
Out of Scope Work	CETAS	Legal	Remediation
Cash settlement	Rebuild/Repair Issues		Scope of Works
Land	Body Corp/MUB		Drainage
Repair Methodologies	Flooding		District Plan
			General Update
			Foundations
			CHRP inquiry
			Other:

Community Host Issues:

Ability	Communication	Information
Other issues: Retired / Beneficiary / Health		
Notes: Planned EQC meeting on 14th (if ItK)		
Previous mediation meeting with Fletcher's		
		Home riddled by damp, mould & exposed to rain
No progress. Refused to RAS but no comm on outcome. However, immediate welfare concern		
Repairs undertaken by CHRP have failed (cosmetic). No comm from Fletcher's on urgent repairs.		
Over cap?		
Insurer:		
Have you used any EQ support services in the past (please specify)?		
Are you currently enrolled with any EQ support services (please specify)?		

Referral Action:

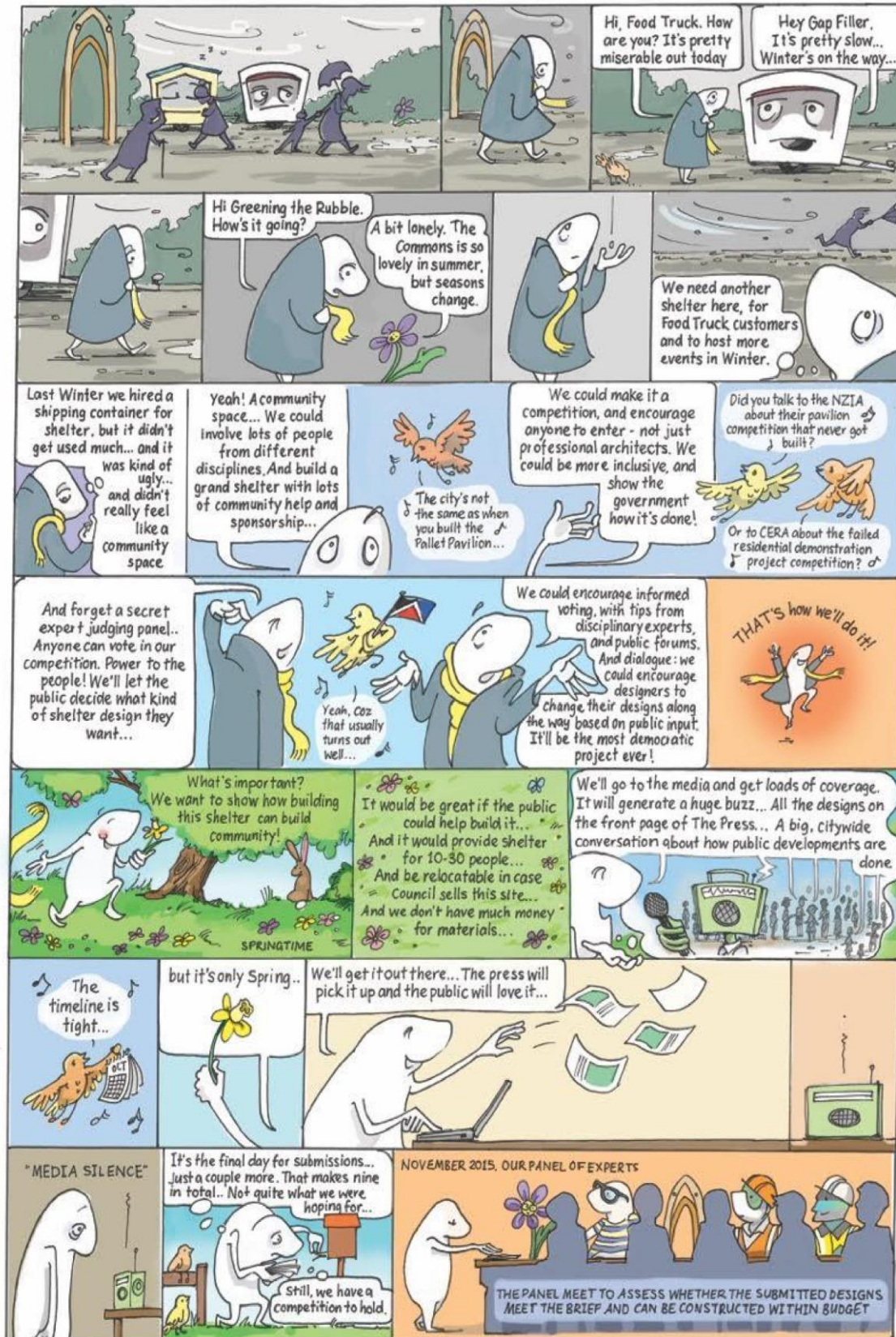
Referral Action:	Agency:	Follow up due date:
Information given	RAS EQC CCC ESCS	
Referral	Other:	
No action		
Escalation		

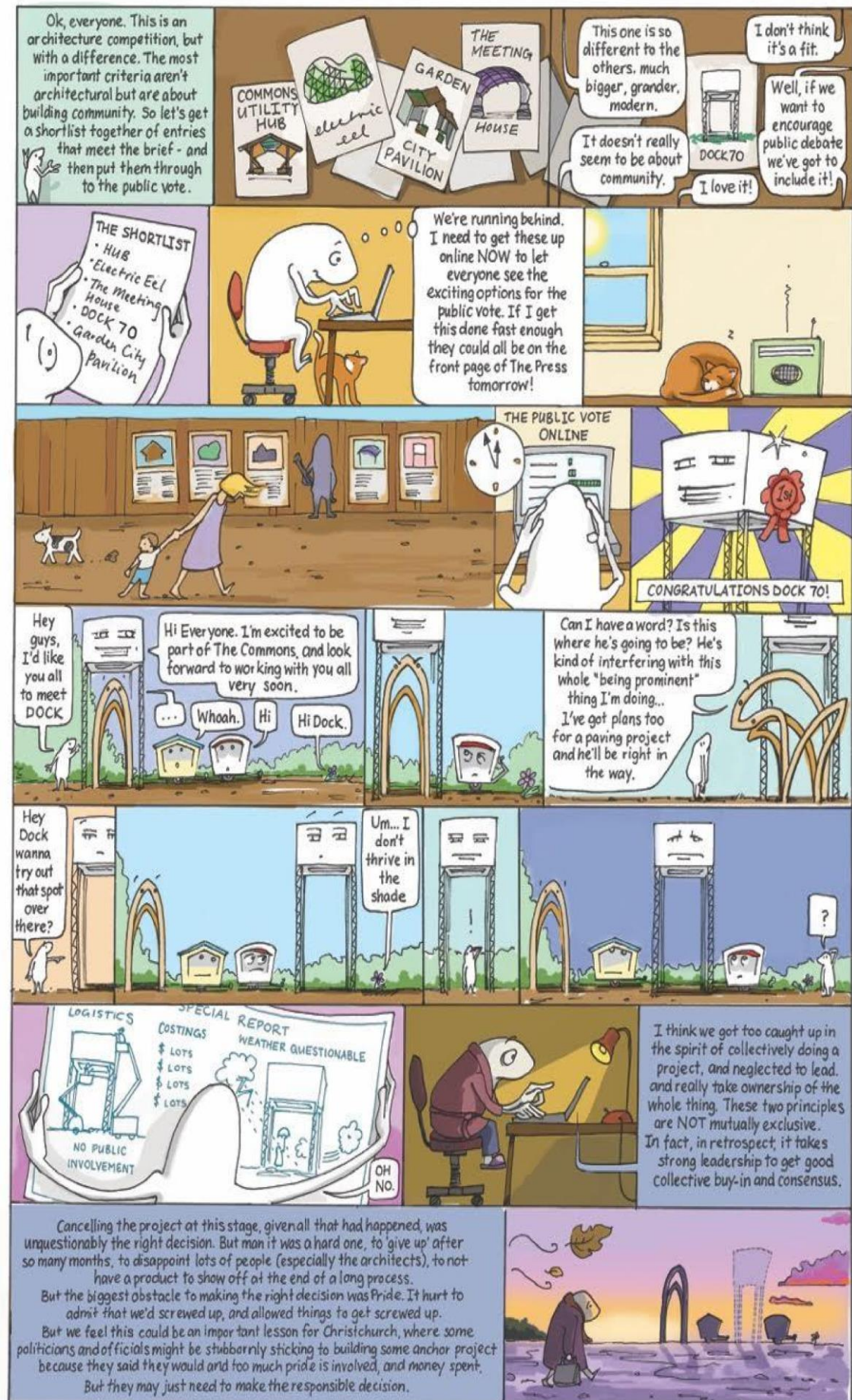
Handwritten notes on form:

- heavily pregnant (5th child)
- feeling as though ping-pong in circles no direction
- No trust
- end of Fletcher's
- feeling as though disconnected, angry & depressed - no progress with gov. or subsequent support services.
- Disconnected - wants help & back as though 'no options left'.
- Refused to RAS
- RAS / Property Pathways
- Urgent - FU by Sarah /
- Diary:

Appendix Six: Gap Filler Cartoon

This two-page cartoon was published in response to a 'failed' project, The Commons Shelter Challenge. It can be accessed at: <https://us2.campaign-archive.com/?u=0647c4a2ad05bbf3142dfb344&id=246b2b6bed>





Appendix Seven: Information form for TSOs (for extensive interviews)

DATE



MID-TERM DISASTER RECOVERY: A STUDY OF THIRD-SECTOR AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Information Form

Dear **INSERT TITLE**

My name is Simon Dickinson, and I am currently completing a PhD in Human Geography at the University of Exeter (United Kingdom). As part of this degree, I am undertaking research on how third-sector organisations have responded to the Canterbury earthquakes of 2010 and 2011, with a particular focus on the mid-term period. The study is part of a collaborative project between the University of Exeter, University of South Florida and the University of Canterbury (New Zealand).

The research seeks to understand how third-sector and community organisations have contributed to the mid-term recovery environment. It focuses on examining how organisations that existed pre-quake have adapted or maintained their services as a result of the quakes, as well as understanding the factors that have led to the emergence of new organisations. The project also sets out to explore how these responses are situated in regards to the recovery strategies of other organisations (e.g. CERA and local council).

I would be very grateful if you were willing to participate in this research, which is part of a larger collaboration on mid-term disaster responses. The project would involve taking part in one interview, which may include a short questionnaire. You were selected to participate in this study because your organisation has been identified as being active in the mid-term recovery period in Christchurch.

It is anticipated that the interview would take approximately one hour, either in person or by phone. With your permission, I would like to record the interview, as this will help with understanding the different factors that shape the way in which your organisation has responded to the earthquakes. After the interview, you will be sent a written transcription of what we discussed, which you will be able to review and correct any points of detail, as you wish.

Your help with this research is completely voluntary. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to. You may also withdraw at any time, without any penalty, if you wish.

The information you provide will help deepen our understanding of how third-sector organisations are affected by, and contribute to, the mid-term recovery period.

However you will not be *individually* identified in any publications or presentations arising from the research. Your name (if provided) will never be used in association with any individual quotations and potentially identifying details (such as household addresses) will never be used or made public. During the interview process you will be given the option to withdraw all identifying details about the organisation that you represent also.

All data collected for the study will be kept in locked and secure facilities and/or in password protected electronic form. Only the members of the research team will have access to the original data. The data will be destroyed five years after the completion of the research.

Questions about this research can be directed to either me or the project supervisor:

- Professor Paul Cloke, Department of Geography, University of Exeter.
Phone: +44 (0) 1392 724522 or email: p.cloke@exeter.ac.uk

This research has been reviewed *and* approved by the University of Exeter (CLES) Human Ethics Committee.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet, which is yours to keep. I would also like to thank you for considering contributing to the research project.

Simon Dickinson

University of Exeter

Phone: +64 (0)3 364-2987 Ext.7931 or 027 420 7377

Email: s.dickinson@exeter.ac.uk

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